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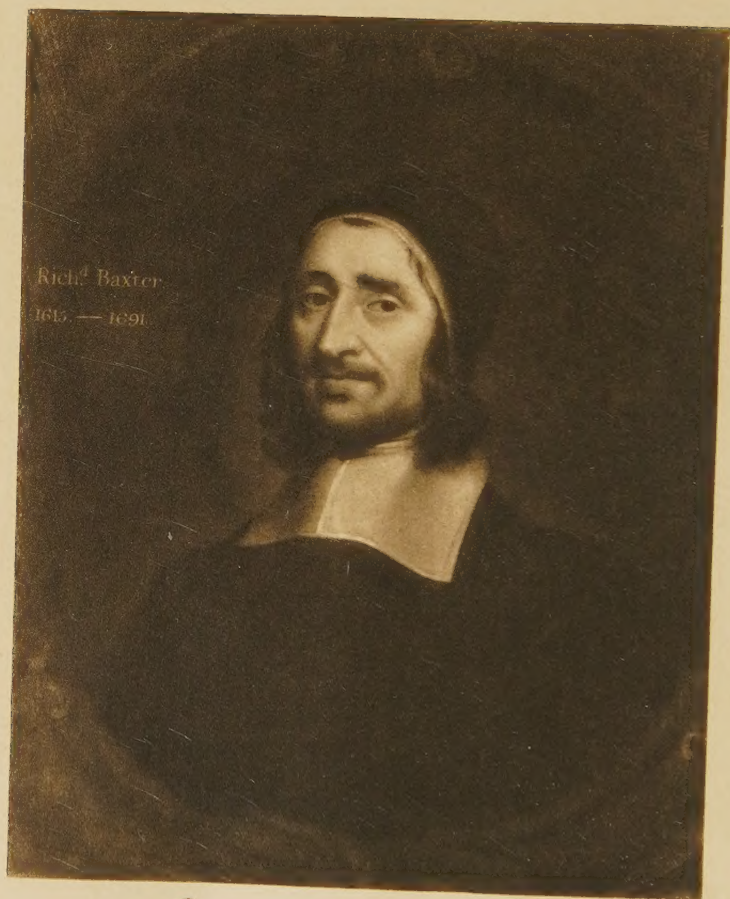
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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
RICHARD BAXTER



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The Autobiography of
RICHARD BAXTER

BEING THE
RELIQUIÆ BAXTERIANÆ
Abridged from the Folio (1696)

WITH
INTRODUCTION, APPENDICES & NOTES

BY
J. M. LLOYD THOMAS



ILLUSTRATED

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TO THE READER

THIS book is the first abridgment ever published of the *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ: or Mr. Richard Baxter's Narrative of the Most Memorable Passages of his Life and Times*, in its own words.

Edmund Calamy's *Abridgment* (1702) has deservedly attained the dignity of a Nonconformist classic, but it is not strictly an abridgment. It is a composite product, being a reduction of Baxter's lively first-person story into a third-person record, woven often indistinguishably into Calamy's own writing. This plan did worse than destroy the piquancy and directness of Baxter's autobiography; it clogged Calamy's own stately diction, so that we have in it neither Baxter nor Calamy at his best, but a somewhat heavy compromise of both.

In his Preface, Calamy says, "Personal Reflections and little Privacys I have dropt, and things which were out of Date, I have pass'd over lightly; sometimes I have kept pretty much to his Language, and sometimes I have taken the freedom to use my own." It is, however, just these touches that often prove most fascinating, and in this present volume, so far as space will allow, they are retained in all their picturesqueness.

The great autobiographical and historical folio *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ* was published in 1696, five years after the death of Baxter, under the editorship of Matthew Sylvester. It is a confused and shapeless hulk, and in a great measure a *dossier* of documents, many of them of no living interest. It has never been reprinted.

The facts concerning its publication illustrate only too well the truth of a remark which Anthony Burgess makes in a Preface to Vine's *Sacrament* (1657): "The posthumous works of learned writers, like fatherless children, are exposed to many wrongs and injuries."

By his will, dated 27 July, 1689, and proved 23 December, 1691, Richard Baxter left all his MSS. to Matthew Sylvester, "but he only to print them with the approval of Mr. Lorrimer,

Mr. Doelittle, Mr. Morris, or Mr. Williams." Sylvester was a meek and lovable man, of considerable learning and of great ministerial ability and piety, but not very popular. His personal devotion to Baxter was profound. He regarded the MS. of the *Autobiography* with somewhat of the veneration which is offered to the relic of a saint. Calamy, in his *Historical Account of My own Life* (vol. i. pp. 376-7), writes:

Mr. Baxter left it with his other MSS. to the care of his beloved friend Mr. Sylvester, who was chary of it in the last degree, and not very forward to let it be seen; yet had not leisure enough to peruse and publish it. . . . I found the good man counted it a sort of sacred thing to have any hand in making alterations of any sort, in which I could not but apprehend he went too far, and was cramped by a sort of superstition.

Distracted by illness and many anxieties, Sylvester, although he had five years for the task, failed to reduce his materials into good order. He could not even "attend the Press and prevent the Errata." His incompetency should be leniently judged and overlooked in a prevailing gratitude. We must remember his own plea:

how confusedly a great quantity of loose papers relating thereunto came into my hands; all of which were to be sorted and reduced to their proper places . . . how little my indisposed and weak hand can write (not an octavo page in a competently great character in an hour).

His worst admission — its charming frankness disarms censure — is that

there were several papers loosely laid, which could not easily be found when needed. And the defectiveness of my very much declining memory made me forget (and the more because of haste and business) where I had laid them after I had found them.

How far Sylvester was hampered (if at all) by the condition in the will, and overborne by them whose approval he had to obtain, is not known. But we owe it to his own hero-worship of Baxter that the MS. has been saved from some "alterations" which the more worldly-wise Calamy would have effected. But even so, a comparison of the Folio with the portions of the original MS. which remain shows that the suppressions and modifications are far from negligible. Some passages are crossed out, possibly by Baxter himself, but others stand untouched and yet are sometimes changed or not printed. A few of these are published in square brackets in the text of this present book. To this extent this Abridgment is also

an expansion and includes some important material that has never before appeared in its context, or indeed at all.

A word is necessary as to my inclusions and exclusions. In the preparation of an anthology, no two men can agree precisely on what should be inserted and what rejected. No doubt my judgment will be found faulty by some quite competent students of Baxter. I have, however, endeavoured to check any personal idiosyncrasy of choice by consulting some Baxter scholars, who have put their own ripe learning with self-effacing magnanimity at my service. But, of course, at the last the choice is my own and I must abide by it.

My decision has been governed not always by what I adjudge to be the intrinsic worth of a particular passage, but by its value when seen in relation to the continuity and organic structure of the whole narrative here presented. Now and again I have allowed myself to choose gold of a lower carat in preference to that of a higher, when I thought the higher had already been sufficiently represented. I have looked upon myself as the curator of a strictly limited museum who may be led to choose, for the sake of the representative character of the whole collection, some specimens wrought in baser metal or with poorer craftsmanship than others intrinsically more valuable.

Omissions are indicated in the text by dots (. . .); and when the meaning seems to require them, I have supplied some words in angle brackets < >. In the difficult business of modernising the spelling and punctuation, I have not aimed at conformity with an inflexible standard of consistency. I have desired that throughout the reader should ever feel, without having the fact too aggressively thrust upon him, that he is reading a seventeenth-century folio and not a modern work. A few archaisms even in spelling have therefore been deliberately and I hope judiciously retained. Manifest misreadings and misprints have been corrected. To avoid interrupting the reader of the main text with irritating footnotes, these are restricted to a few glossarial explanations. Other notes are inserted at the end, and may be ignored or consulted at leisure. I have divided the book into chapters and offered the assistance of some dates. The sectional figures of the original Folio I have omitted. In many of the longer sections they would have afforded little if any help, and in some instances would have caused confusion. The Folio does not follow always the section numbers of the MS.

In order that this book may give the story of Baxter with some completeness, I have prefixed a documented Introductory Essay. In this I have tried to show his reaction to some of the great controversies of his time and to assess the significance of his mind and character for our own day. I have also added two appendices: (I.) "Last Trial and Death"; (II.) "Richard Baxter's Love-Story and Marriage."

This book is intended for the general reader who loves an eventful document which possesses some of the characteristics of memoir and diary. It will, however, I trust, prove useful to students of the Civil Wars and of the literature and general history of the seventeenth century. To theologians and ecclesiastics some familiarity with Baxter's life and work is almost indispensable, and has never been more needed than in our own time, when (after making the necessary changes) many of the old issues emerge once more to dominate our modern debates. But, above all, this shortened work is offered for its own human interest as pure autobiography and as the self-disclosure of a man of unusual intellectual and spiritual genius and of massive moral stature—too many-sided and synthetic in vision for complete understanding by most of his contemporaries, and, I fear, too judiciously comprehensive in his catholic sympathies to be appreciated by the narrower religious partisans of our own time.

I should like to thank all who have helped me in this undertaking. Nothing has surprised and pleased me more than the enthusiasm with which, without a single exception, all whom I have consulted have responded to my inquiries. A list of all who have helped would be too long to be printed here. But I must mention two above all others whose assistance and encouragement exceed my power fittingly to thank them. Chief of all who have helped me, and indeed chief of Baxter scholars, is the Rev. Dr. Fred. J. Powicke. My indebtedness to him goes far beyond his published biography of Baxter and his illuminating articles in the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* and elsewhere. He has been the perfection of patience in answering my many questions and he has been unreservedly generous in putting at my service some of the as yet unpublished results of his own original and prolonged researches. He has read my Introductory Essay and Appendices. It is to him I owe some of the suppressed passages here restored to the text, which but for his references might have escaped my own less thorough and minute examination of the MSS.

Next to him, I owe most to Mr. Stephen K. Jones, M.A., the librarian of Dr. Williams's Library. He has most generously allowed me to consult his expert knowledge on many points, and has read the proofs of my text and supplied me with many dates and made valuable suggestions and corrections.

The Trustees of Dr. Williams's Library were good enough, under the usual inter-library safeguards, to send some of their priceless Baxter MSS. to the City of Birmingham Reference Library to facilitate my further study of them. In addition to my obligations to Mr. Stephen K. Jones already mentioned, and to his courteous assistants, I am grateful to Mr. Walter Powell, the Chief Librarian of the Birmingham City Library, for making this arrangement possible and for other services rendered by him and his friendly staff.

The veteran historical scholar, the Rev. Alexander Gordon, not for the first time, has given me references and advice drawn from his own unique knowledge of the origins of Nonconformity. My genial and always generous ecclesiastical teacher, the late Professor J. E. Odgers, of Oxford, encouraged me throughout the quarter of a century during which I have been a keenly-interested reader of the works of Richard Baxter.

I cannot omit to thank also the Rev. A. N. S. Scott, the vicar of High Ercall, for letting me examine the entries in the church-registers of Baxter's baptism and of the marriages of some of his maternal ancestors; the Rev. E. O. Burbage, the vicar of Evesham, for allowing me to copy two old deeds-poll in his custody appointing new trustees, of whom Baxter was one, of the Evesham Lectureship; Canon Sladen, of Kidderminster, for permission to have a photograph taken of the portrait in the vestry of Baxter's old church, St. Mary's and All Saints'; the Rev. J. E. Stronge, of Kidderminster, who consented to a photograph being taken of Baxter's beautiful pulpit in the vestry of the New Meeting Church, and who aided me in other ways; Mr. Herbert New, of Birmingham; the Rev. John Ellis, of Evesham, and the Town Clerk of Evesham; the Rev. F. A. Homer. The Rev. A. E. O'Connor was my pleasant companion on walks around the Wrekin haunts of Baxter's childhood and youth—High Ercall, Rowton, Apley Castle, Eaton Constantine and Wroxeter—and looked up some references for me in the Shrewsbury Library. Mr. E. A. B. Barnard, the Editor of *Evesham and Four Shires Notes and Queries*, gave me some useful hints. Mr. H. E. Chafy, of Rous Lench Court, received me with great kindness in the

stately home which gave hospitality to Baxter when, ill and expecting an early death, he began writing *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*.

J. M. LLOYD THOMAS.

BIRMINGHAM, 1925.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The best (but not entirely complete or accurate) bibliography of Baxter's works is Grosart's *Annotated List* (1868).

The only life of Baxter (apart from his own *Autobiography*) which can be unreservedly commended is the scholarly work of the Rev. Fred. J. Powicke, M.A., Ph.D., *A Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter*, published by Jonathan Cape (1924). The second volume is yet to appear.

Orme's *Life of Baxter* (1830) remains a full and useful biography though written with considerable bias. From it one could more easily think that Baxter was a Presbyterian or an Independent than the moderate Episcopalian that he ever was.

Richard Baxter: Puritan and Mystic, by the Rev. A. R. Ladell, M.A. S.P.C.K., 1925), is a brief study written with much charm and insight.

5 with others were - ^{of 70} M^r Boulton, & divers others; & some went to see
M^r Calamy, & M^r Manton, M^r Bowley, & divers others; & some went to see
him, to whom the M^r gave such encouraging promises of ready
satisfaction, as raised some of us to high expectations, and when he came in,
as he past through ye City, towards St. Clements, ye Lord Mayor, & the
other magistrates attended him with acclamations, & by ye hands of old Sir
Arthur Jackson presented him with a rich & round Bible, w^{ch} he re-
ceived wth lots of joy, & it shew'd by ye rule of his actions, //
§ 89. A little before this, while ye people were desirous to be satisfied
of ye King, because they had various reports of him, a paper was print-
ed, call'd, his Character, by a nameless author, but said to be by
our Colourell Jacob a Papist, w^{ch} much wrong'd ye King, & it
was of many! for while he upbraid him in other respects, he
bring'd in a confession, & if he came in charmed wth ye manner
of Venice, it is not to be wonder'd at. & when ye said in first
for a subject to have bin silent, & not under pretence of obedi-
ence, a fault w^{ch} his prince might have done, to have indulg'd it, & w^{ch} //
§ 90. about this time I had some conference with one (I call'd him
self) William Johnson a Papist, y^e occasion, progress, & end of w^{ch}
I will here give at once to avoid further repetitions by it.
When I was at Kidderminster (1659) one M^r Laughton a stranger
in that town, sent me a sheet of paper full of scribbles by William John-
son, containing an account of a Church forward of prophecies, &
sibility, as if none but ye Church of Rome & sheet in connection with
it had bin successfully publish'd. Calling all on his opponent to prove
it a Church, & not a Papist's. He said the name deserv'd not.



BAXTER'S ANCESTRAL HOME AT EATON CONSTANTINE

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

THE following *Autobiography* shows an ascetic figure stepping out of the mists of the seventeenth century and appealing to the sympathies of the modern mind. There is a unique fusion of qualities in the personality of Richard Baxter which, even when we see him caricatured by satirists, persecuted by enemies, or, still worse, disfigured with his own failings, moves us with wonder which sometimes passes into awe. His intellectual as well as his religious distinction survives in language that gains in idiomatic freshness by touches of delicious archaism. His theology is, to a large extent, outmoded, but not on that account to be despised. The datednesses of many of his views are obvious and even obtrusive, but they will trouble only the shallow reader. What grips the understanding thinker is his enduring undatedness, the timeless element which will survive all our fleeting modernity.

To Lord Morley he is "the profoundest theologian of them all"; and to the historian S. R. Gardiner he is "the most learned and moderate of the Dissenters."

With all his commanding austerity, "his countenance," according to Sylvester, "was composed and grave, somewhat inclining to smile." His plain demeanour bears about it an air of refinement befitting his good breeding and social connections. His father and mother were of good stock and standing, and though he speaks of himself simply as "a mean Free-holder (called a Gentleman for his ancestors' sake, but of small estate, though sufficient),"¹ his family had an honoured position. His father, on the death of Baxter's mother, married the daughter of Sir Thomas Hunkes, and sister of Sir Fulke Hunkes, a Royalist commander in the Civil War and for a while Governor of Shrewsbury for the king in 1644.

Baxter early made a brief stay at Court, but there found himself ill at ease, and speedily left it. His heart was with the humble, even when he associated with the greatest minds of

¹ *Breviate of the Life of Mrs. Margaret Baxter*, p. 1.

his age and was the familiar friend and trusted counsellor of some of the most influential personages in the land.

Throughout his extraordinary career, all the dramatic issues of that turbulent era are seen energetically alive and struggling for mastery. To understand him in the range and subtlety of his rich and powerful mind, were to understand also the political and religious forces that incessantly clashed in fateful conflict all around him. For many of these he was himself the storm-centre. He stood within the tempest on a lonely eminence and looked out into the far future in all directions.

No man of his day was so distinguished in so many spheres. Although he was equalled and even surpassed by a few in one or more of his own subjects, and although his own reputation would probably have been higher still had he written less, no one rivalled him in the comprehensive grasp of his genius and the versatility of his learning; no one came near him in his life's astounding productivity when measured by combined quantity and quality of output.

His Puritanism was intense and sincere, never eccentric, and, after he had come to mature years, always marked by a rare sobriety and ripeness of judgment. His ethical severity was tempered by tender pity as well as by lyrical devotion which often caught fire and flamed into poetic and soaring eloquence.

He had a grim, ironic sense of humour, barbed with sarcasm. He was "sparingly facetious; but never light or frothy."¹ He can tell quaint stories and deftly turn the tables on his opponents with obvious delight. The dubious device of a pun he will not despise, as when commenting on Vane and Sterry he remarks that "Vanity and Sterility were never more happily conjoined." He merrily twits the famous Dr. Owen and—a pleasant glimpse of the ancestral Adam—challenges him to a wager on a theological point. The sporting offer Dr. Owen declines, but it served the purpose, for the incident lapses—*solvitur risu*. His illustrations are apt and sometimes livened by an element of mischievous mirth.

A servant, when his master and mistress were fighting, answered one at the door who desired to speak with the master of the house: "You must stay till I see who gets the better before I can tell you who is the master of the house." So truly, I fear, the conflict is so hard with many Christians.²

¹ Sylvester's *Funeral Sermon*.

² *Directions for Weak Distempered Christians* (1669), Preface.

Nor did he lose this happy gift in his old age. In a book published in the year in which he died, he tells a story which not only preachers but the more genial of their victims will relish:

I heard of a preacher that would needs have his servant tell him what men said of his preaching; and being urged (but loth), he said: "They say, sir, that you very often repeat the same things; and to tell you the truth, I think it is too true, for the last day you repeated that which you said divers days before." Saith the master, "Tell me what it was." He paused awhile, and said, "I remember not the words now." Saith the master, "Didst thou so understand them as to tell me the matter and meaning of them?" But he could tell neither. "Nay, then," saith the master, "I will repeat them yet again for thy sake, and such as thou art."¹

Baxter, who had this shrewd awareness of the ways of men, had also, by the same gift, a searching knowledge of himself and of his own little vanities. He never easily conquered his boyhood's fault which his schoolmaster had rebuked with the remark of Apelles to the cobbler. All the more, probably, he shrank from the dangerous praise of men. When an admiring correspondent sent him a letter full of expressions of honour, Baxter sharply answered, "I have the remainders of pride in me; how dare you blow up the sparks of it?" He knew that he was a man of note and stature, but this, by an easily understood excess, made him protest a humility which sometimes topples over into an inverted egotism. He speaks of himself and his own sinfulness in terms which even from a Puritan seem too severe. But we cannot miss the truth that he was a lowly and surrendered soul with a breadth of charity that could say: "I can as willingly be a martyr for love as for any article of the Creed."² The fervour of his emotional nature had its raptures cooled and corrected by the logical precision of his thinking. He was more than one of the great preachers of his day, more than a doctrinal and moral theologian whose fame had spread to Europe and America, and some of whose books had been translated into French, German, Welsh and Indian. He was a considerable philosopher and seriously regarded himself as such.³ His acute intellect sometimes had the incisiveness of a diamond writing on glass. He shared in this respect the lucidity and hardness of the schoolmen whom he had studied from his youth. He would have been

¹ *Against the Revolt to a Foreign Jurisdiction* (1691), To the Reader.

² Bates's *Funeral Sermon*, pp. 115, 116, 120. Cp. *post*, p. 170.

³ *Of the Nature of Spirits: especially Man's Soul* (1682), p. 4.

in his element in discussions with Aquinas, Occam or Scotus. He admired their knitted grip on fine distinctions, yet was never completely held by any of them. There are daring speculations of his own which anticipated some of the methods and principles attributed as original to metaphysicians of a later day.¹ He is the greatest of the few Englishmen, before our time, who have adequately appreciated the importance of the under-rated "science" of casuistry, so that his immensely erudite and laborious *Christian Directory* still remains an almost² unexplored mine from which the moral theology of the twentieth century may quarry vast riches.

The disasters that have now befallen a divided Christianity were seen by him with a clearness of detail which it would be but a pardonable exaggeration to call clairvoyant. The impending retribution roused him to fierce activity. He toiled all through life with a passionate fidelity that quite overstepped his own hopefulness to avoid it. In vain he prayed and pleaded and worked for a single, united, broadly comprehensive Church that should be at once national and truly catholic. There seems a strain almost of fanaticism in the very sanity with which he refused to recognise that centrifugal tendencies had gone quite out of control. He would not, even in his hopelessness, believe that the leaders in Church and State could be taught no longer by reason but only by long and tragic experience of the calamities that soon or late must smite a house divided against itself. Though he saw the coming miseries, he clung to the bare possibility of an eleventh-hour national repentance. There is here the loyalty of a man who is never beaten while breath breathes in his body. In God's great game he was a gambler, and he was prepared to stake his all on one desperate chance. In this adventure, where he lost, as at Ludlow Castle in his youth where he believed the devil helped him to win a different game, he risked his last throw. "I knew no more than that it was not lost till all my Table-men were lost, and would not give it over till then." There survives a pathetic letter of January 9th, 1684, in MS., in which Baxter writes:

I lay in tears, in deepest sorrow when our overturners had done their work, in which I know who were (to the amazement and

¹ See e.g. his anticipation of Kant. Coleridge's *Notes on English Divines* (1853), vol. ii. pp. 106-7; *post*, p. 212 and note.

² Its value has this year been recognised in *Chapters from a Christian Directory*, selected by Jeanette Tawney, with a Preface by the Right Rev. Charles Gore, D.D.

consternation of my soul) the chief instruments of all the rest. I know what I say . . . [sentences carefully erased]. (This is only between you and me.)¹

Ecclesiastical controversy occupied too much of his time and produced disappointing results. In this task some of his virtues proved defects. His uncompromising courage and honesty; his cross-bench mind and impatience of tactics, coupled with his corrosive wit, caused the extremists of all parties to forsake him. The excellent character and abilities of many of the diocesan party were ungrudgingly admitted by him, but the worldly-wiseman he excoriated with unforgivable scorn. He offended the bigotry of his own followers by declaring the—to them—astonishing belief that even “Papists” might be saved; but it was hardly likely that his apology for this novel view would please either side: “We say that a Papist as a Christian may be saved, but not as a Papist. As a man that hath the plague may live, but not by the plague.”²

Probably because he never laboured after a literary style,—he had, says Bates, “a noble negligence of style”—he was a writer of unsought distinction and charm, full of piquant savour and arresting allusions. Like John Donne, with whose self-conscious and brilliant artificialities he had nothing in common, he revelled in gruesome imagery. An example of his merciless use of allusion may be seen in his reference to the more cynical among the promoters of the Act of Uniformity who seemed to him to rejoice in the hope that their opponents would perjure themselves by subscribing. They reminded him of “that monster of Milan that made his enemy renounce God to save his life before he stabbed him, that he might murder soul and body at a stroke.” Like many another man of exquisite artistic sensibility, and certainly like most of even the best of his controversial contemporaries, he descended on occasion to repulsive coarseness of metaphor. True he wrote verses; but rarely, if at all, achieved poetry. Yet some of his lines catch a faint echo of the “chirp of Ariel” and indicate that he could have been an acceptable poet had he greatly cared to excel as such. He did not care. His defence of his *Poetical Fragments* is characteristic:

I have long thought that a painter, a musician, and a poet are contemptible if they be not excellent: and that I am not excellent, I am satisfied; but I am more patient of contempt than many are.

¹ Baxter MSS. (Letters), ii.

² *Key for Catholics* (1659), p. 262.

Common painters serve for poor men's work: and a fiddler may serve at a country wedding.

We are fortunate in possessing the autobiographical memoirs of this observant eye-witness of some memorable scenes of the most prolonged and momentous constitutional conflict chronicled in English history. He is guilty of few errors in his statement of facts, and, whatever may be said of his verdict upon them, his truthfulness and candour are beyond challenge. He was credulous enough to accept seriously some of the perjuries of the infamous Titus Oates, but he was honest in his credulity. Referring to the almost classical conclusion of Part I., Dean Stanley spoke with judgment when he said, "It stands in the very foremost rank of autobiographical reflections." Coleridge, who in his *Notes on English Divines* submits the *Autobiography* to close examination and frequently to censure, bursts forth into many exclamations of admiration, and confesses:

I may not infrequently doubt Baxter's memory, or even his competence, in consequence of his particular modes of thinking; but I could almost as soon doubt the Gospel verity as his veracity.

Under . . . accursed persecutions he feels and reasons more like an angel than a man.¹

He was a prominent but pacificatory figure in many of the armed ordeals of the Civil Wars. He was present at the battle of Langport, the siege of Bridgwater, the final assault of Bristol. He hears the clattering of galloping hoofs through the streets of Kidderminster. He is told of scouting-parties peering over the ridges of Kinver Edge, now dominated by his own monument. We see him at the sieges of Exeter, Oxford, Banbury and Worcester. He preaches at Alcester to the far-sounding cannonade at Edgehill. His congregation hears the boom of firing muffled by distance, yet sits spellbound under the preacher's words, as he, hearing nothing of that earthly battle, goes on expounding the strangely appropriate text: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence."² He possessed a rare gift for description and could etch with brief and biting realism what passed before his eyes. Like other preachers, he used redundant words to reach the popular mind, and when moved he writes, in opulent but faithfully coloured language, accounts like those of the Plague and the Great Fire. Yet few could portray a character or an event in simpler or more

¹ Vol. ii. pp. 68 and 43.

² Baxter's "To the Reader"; Clark's *Lives* (1683).

tensely nervous lines which leave upon the imagination the effect of brilliant definition. He was not primarily a narrator or a diarist. He was more often among the actors on the stage of affairs, and even behind the scenes, than an onlooker among the spectators.

As we read his record of the times and follow his movements, we are constrained to yield to the spell of that great epic. Gradually we are carried away: the things of our day dissolve and evaporate to float past as an irrelevant murmur while the thunder of Rupert's Horse and of Cromwell's Ironsides become loud in our ears, or we mingle with the audience to overhear the futile, prejudged discussions of the Savoy Conference, or see weaving around him the plots of sinister intriguers and the perjuries of hired informers.

This *Autobiography* does better than provide the humanist with a confessional document of capital interest. It has more than a purely historical value; although, with only two or three other contemporary narratives like Ludlow's and Whitelocke's *Memoirs*, it is a basic, though shapeless and confused, document for historical research. It lays bare the complex mind of a stern, lovable, repellent and attractive figure. In him we seem to have all contradictions joined. He is a catholic Puritan as Savonarola was a puritan Catholic; a parliamentary Royalist who took Cromwell for an ambitious usurper and thought that Hooker and other defenders of monarchy conceded too much to democracy; a nonconformist Episcopalian who would fain, had conscience permitted, have conformed; an intellectualist, but one who, as Calamy says, "talked in the pulpit with great freedom about another world, like one that had been there and was come as a sort of express from thence to make a report concerning it."

He was a lover of poetry and of music, a defender of art and imagination. His "Epistle to the Reader" prefixed to the *Poetical Fragments* is a refutation of the shallow fallacy that Puritanism is necessarily hostile to art. Baxter is himself a supreme artist because an artist in holiness.

I am an adversary to their philosophy that vilify sense, because it is in brutes, and am past doubt that the noble spirits of sensitives are debased ignorantly, by pretending wits, that know not what they say or glory in; and human souls are not less sensitive for being rational, but are eminently sensitive. Yea, reason hath in it more of eminent internal sensation than those men think that debase sense. The Scripture that saith of God that he is life and light, saith also that he is love, and love is complacency, and

complacence is joy; and to say God is infinite, essential love and joy is a better notion, than with Cartesians and Cocceians to say that God and angels and spirits are but a thought or an idea. What is heaven to us, if there be no love and joy? . . . For myself, I confess that harmony and melody are the pleasure and elevation of my soul and have made a Psalm of Praise in the Holy Assembly the chief delightful exercise of my religion and my life; and hath helped to bear down all the objections which I have heard against church music. . . . Let those that savour not melody, leave others to their different appetites and be content to be so far strangers to their delights.

Yet his concern was not for music as a secular art, but as an expression of praise in the private and public offices of religion. "I scarce cared for it anywhere else; and if it might not be holily used, it should never have been used for me."¹

Whether Baxter is to be called a mystic will depend, of course, on our definition of mysticism. The word has elusive contents, but it would seem impossible to define mysticism in such a way as to rule out Baxter, unless we hold that to be an intellectualist is necessarily to be no mystic. Such a theory would rule out some of the greatest mystics in Christian, and indeed non-Christian, history. There are two distinct strands in Western mysticism which tend to become tangled. There is the contemplative mysticism which is not dependent on visions or voices, nor given to excessive raptures and trances, though these may occur. This is represented by saints like Augustine and Bernard. The other type is abnormal, and, in its extremer forms, is suggestive of nervous derangement. It is given to hallucinatory locutions and apparitions (often of the Evil One), like the spectacle of running blood that made George Fox cry, "Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield." This is represented by saints like Teresa. It set in with St. Gertrude and the Mechtilds in the century following St. Bernard. These mystics believed they received direct, often audible, communications and messages. Baxter was an earnest and believing student of psychical phenomena, but his own mysticism had not a touch of fantastic extravagance. He represented the better strain of sane Western mysticism that is purely religious—the kind described by Dom Cuthbert Butler as

objective and empirical; being merely, on the practical side, the endeavour of the soul to mount to God in prayer and seek union with him and surrender itself wholly to his love; and, on the

¹ *Poetical Fragments*, Epistle to the Reader.

theoretical side, just the endeavour to describe the first-hand experiences of the personal relations between the soul and God in contemplation and union.¹

Certainly he was much of a rationalist in the sense that Aquinas, who attained to the supreme mystical vision, was a rationalist; but all will agree that, mystics or not, both were saints of seraphic ardour of devotion. Baxter ever stood within earshot of the insistent and always unsilenced questionings of the sceptic. Few philosophers could quarrel with the thoroughness of his initial use of Reason:

Whatever the soul of man doth entertain must make its first entrance at the understanding; which must be satisfied first of its truth, and secondly of its goodness, before it find further admittance. If this porter be negligent, it will admit of anything that bears but the face or name of truth and goodness; but if it be faithful and diligent in its office, it will examine strictly and search to the quick. What is found deceitful it casteth out, that it go no further; but what is found to be sincere . . . it letteth into the very heart, where the Will and Affections do with welcome entertain it, and by concoction (as it were) incorporate it into its own substance.²

But the "porter" having given the challenge faithfully, then Revelation itself, if it but give the true password, is admitted.

Once Baxter is convinced that it is indeed God who speaks and reveals, then "I will believe anything in the world . . . though the thing itself be ever so unreasonable. For I have Reason"—*Reason* still!—"to believe (or rather to know) that all is true which God revealeth, how improbable so ever to flesh and blood." This is familiar scholastic doctrine. As premise and preliminary it concedes all that any revelationist, Protestant or Roman, may require. But it may readily lend itself, as indeed it did at a later age, to thinkers who will gladly accept its defence of Reason while leaving the rest.

Many years later, in 1681, Baxter spoke far otherwise of Reason. Though still recognising "that passion is oft such a hindrance of judgment that a man should be very suspicious of himself till it be laid," he is

assured that God made it not in vain; and that reason is a sleepy, half-useless thing, till some passion excite it. . . . And God usually beginneth the awakening of reason, and the conversion of sinners, by the awakening of their useful passions: their fear, their grief, repentance, desire, etc. I confess, when God awakeneth in me those

¹ *Western Mysticism*, pp. 187-8.

² *Saints' Everlasting Rest*, Part III. chap. i. § 1.

passions which I account rational and holy, I am so far from condemning them, that I think I was half a fool before, and have small comfort in sleepy reason. Lay by all the passionate part of love and joy, and it will be hard to have any pleasant thoughts of heaven.¹

The "porter," after all, cannot shut out the mystical element in religion or in Baxter himself. This mystical strain is apparent and, thus understood, even prominent in his more devotional writings. But in his more controversial passages he subdues it, owing, in no small measure, to his hostility to the Quakers, Ranters and kindred subjectivist sects. When, later on, the Quakers had moderated their extravagances and set up a disciplinary system, Baxter admitted that he had underrated the mystical experiences of the inward witness of the Spirit. Yet he had many and close affinities, as we have seen, with the Schoolmen. He was a casuist of extreme penetration and analytical keenness. He hated obscurity and evasion only more than he hated over-logical and artificial distinctions.

There is about him, however, the unworldly—Orme calls Baxter *unearthly*—atmosphere of one who often subscribes himself "*moriturus*," or "at the brink of the grave and the door of eternity." In his funeral sermon on Baxter, William Bates says: "In him the virtues of the contemplative and active life were eminently united. . . . There was an air of humility and sanctity in his mortified countenance; and his deportment was becoming a stranger upon earth, and a citizen of heaven."² All through his career he was feeling the imminence of the stroke of—his own matchless phrase—"the inexorable Leveller," and because of this he is ever riding post, busying himself with unresting application to the humdrum details of parish work and of house-to-house catechising of families. No man was ever more absorbed in affairs than he. After giving us something like a time-table of his labours which might shame the most faithful priest, and which seems to leave no chink or interstice for the innumerable other labours that made him famous, he adds casually, "but all these my labours . . . were my recreations." His "little time to study" he regarded as the greatest external affliction of his life. But out of that little time poured forth a ceaseless cataract of writings which amount to nearly two hundred separate treatises, to say nothing of prefaces and

¹ *Poetical Fragments*, Epistle.

² *Funeral Sermon*, p. 114.

commendations, such as that written for a book by a Roman Catholic entitled, after the manner of the age, *A Just and Seasonable Reprehension of Naked Breasts and Shoulders* (1678).

He had the real scholar's love of books. He feels towards them as if they were alive—the breathing children of the human mind. One of the bitterest tragedies of the Great Fire was, for him, the destruction of so many priceless volumes, suggesting the melancholy thought that some masterpieces may have then perished for ever. Again and again throughout his writings are little touches revealing this fondness. A beautiful example appears in his *Dying Thoughts* (1683), which he wrote originally for his own consolation, with no thought of publication:

When I die, I must depart not only from sensual delights, but from the more manly pleasures of my studies, knowledge and converse with many wise and godly men, and from all my pleasure in reading, hearing, public and private exercises of religion, etc. I must leave my library and turn over those pleasant books no more.¹

But greatly as he loved books, he loved souls more, and for their sakes could deny himself his desire for solitude and retirement. In his own memorable words, which he often repeats, he preached “as a dying man to dying men,” and for that very reason all the more convincingly as a living man to living men. “Weakness and pain,” he writes to Anthony à Wood, “helped me to study how to die; that set me on studying how to live.”

All through his life he was a sick and suffering man and the victim of his own and others' medical experiments. He practised voluntarily as a doctor, and had considerable knowledge and experience of the bodily and mental diseases of men. He seems to have been peculiarly successful in the treatment of “melancholy,” and his remarks on this subject suggest that our modern psycho-analysts would have had little except their technique to teach him. His quackery was not so much his own as that of the crude medical empiricism of his day. When he accepted a prescription of a decoction of “moss from a dead man's skull,” or swallowed a “gold bullet” (a kind, by the way, that came not out of him save by public prayer and fasting), he did what was in strictest accordance with contemporary medical “science.” Dr. George Bates and Dr. Micklethwaite, who prescribed the moss from a dead man's skull, were most eminent in their profession, Dr. Bates being

¹ *Dying Thoughts*, p. 87.

chief physician to Charles II. and Dr. Micklethwaite President of the College of Physicians.¹ When Charles II. was dying, Macaulay tells us, "the patient was bled largely. Hot iron was applied to his head. A loathsome volatile salt, extracted from human skulls, was forced into his mouth." Much later, John Wesley, in his *Primitive Physic*, was telling his readers, "Dry and powder a toad. Make into small pills and take one every hour till the convulsions cease." "Every morning cut a little turf of fresh earth and, lying down, breathe into the hole for a quarter of an hour. I have known a deep consumption cured thus." Baxter's "quackery" was mellow wisdom compared with some of these prescriptions; yet it was bad enough, and the marvel is that he lived to tell his tale. Yet live he did—a long intense life, crowded with heroic activity, and, if one may play with his own remark, he was "seldom well at ease but in a sweat."

The mind that is always restlessly interfering in controversy, and yet unable, whole-heartedly, to take sides, may be base or noble, but is certain to prove exasperating to partisans. Baxter would have agreed with Hazlitt's remark, "Partisanship is one of the profoundnesses of Satan." He towered above most of even the leaders of his contemporaries, but he had a fatal gift for dividing his followers and alienating all but a few through-fire-and-water admirers. His physical and moral courage matched the bravest valour of his times. Earth had little to bestow on him wherewith to comfort his diseased body or console his longing soul. He looked up wistfully to the Saints' Everlasting Rest and groaned in spirit for release from his pains and the contentions of the world.

We shall then rest also from our own sad divisions and unchristian-like quarrels with one another. As he said who saw the carcases lie together, as if they had embraced each other, who had been slain by each other in duel. . . . How lovingly do they embrace one another, being dead, who perished through their mutual implacable enmity.²

Because he lived so constantly in that supernatural and immortal world, his was a soul that could neither be bribed nor intimidated. He had no respect of persons and was fearless before the face of man. He never blenched before the mightiest potentate on earth; only before God was he a "dung-hill worm." He spoke with stern detachment and dignity to

¹ *Ath. Oxon.*, vol. iii., 1265 (Bliss ed. 1817).

² *Saints' Everlasting Rest*, Part I. chap. vii. § 14.

Cromwell, who harangued him with great tediousness for hours in vain. In the same spirit he confronted Charles II., who made him a chaplain-in-ordinary and offered him a bishopric or the headship of a Scottish University College, both of which he declined with courtly grace and gratitude. Scrupulously truthful and with a prophetic gift as of "second sight" for distant events, which, however, he foreshortened into the impossible possibilities of the hour, he was always trying to be a reconciler, but succeeding only in wrecking the too facile schemes of ecclesiastical diplomatists. Often the chief spokesman of the Presbyterians, he was, for all that some historians and others say, never a Presbyterian. He died as he lived, a moderate Episcopalian. He saw the faults of his colleagues with the same clarity and judged them with the same asperity with which he detected and censured his own. He reproved "prelatists" and "sectaries" alike with intolerable bitterness and scathing invective, and thereupon was sincerely surprised that his words were so ill-received. "The Lord knows, that, though my words may be too rough and earnest, yet my soul longeth after the unity and peace of the Church. And I never yet wrote against any brother so sharply, but I could heartily live with him in dear love and communion."¹ In his *Reply to Mr. Thomas Beverley* (1691), erroneously believed by Orme to be the last writing of Baxter for publication,² he reproves Beverley with that kind of charity which is hardest to bear: "You say very well against catching at words and surmising strange opinions. But he that speaketh ill and meaneth well should keep his meaning to himself till he can and will intelligibly express it." Then he adds genially, "Though I am noted to have too sharp a reproving style, I do profess that I can bear more than I use; yea, that I love reproof and my reprovers." And in his Prefatory Letter in *A Saint or a Brute* (1662) he can write, "I never knew that I had one enemy in the world that ever was acquainted with me." But precisely by expecting others to have a like candour he acted on smaller minds as a maddening irritant.³

In view of the striking modernity of his attitude on the

¹ *The Preface Apologetical to T. Blake* (1654).

² His last was *The Poor Husbandman's Advocate*, a moving and singularly beautiful appeal on behalf of the agricultural poor. This was prepared for publication and is dated 18 October, 1691, six weeks before his death. It yet awaits publication (Baxter MSS., vol. iii. Treatises). It is shortly to appear under the editorship of Dr. Powicke.

³ An outrageous example of this effect appears in Cole's marginal notes to his copy of the *Reliquiae Baxterianae* in the British Museum.

subject of Church unity and comprehension—an attitude almost more relevant to our day than to his—it should carefully be studied and pondered. Here it can only rapidly be sketched. Baulked and defeated again and again, he repeated his appeals for a just understanding of the case of the “mere” Nonconformist as distinct from the “sectary.” In his Prefatory Letter to *An Apology for the Nonconformist Ministry*, most of it written in 1668–9, but owing to the impossibility of getting it licensed¹ published only in 1681, he makes a moving prayer to the more moderate bishops whom he mentions by name:

I beg of you as on my knees, for your own sakes, for England's, for the Church's, for Christ's, that you will agree with us on these terms. I ask nothing of you for my own self: I need nothing that you can give me. My time of service is near an end: but *England* will be *England*, and souls and the Church's peace will be precious, and the cause will be the same when all present Nonconformists are dead; and bishops must die as well as we.

But his appeal was without result. His moderate Episcopalianism, though not such as would be acceptable without modification even to-day, was based on the ministry of the early Church and on present expediences. On the practical issue, indeed, he saw what, after two hundred years, Anglicans themselves are now coming to see, namely, that the huge unwieldy diocesan frame of English Episcopacy is inimical to efficiency of episcopal function. It puts on nearly every bishop an impossibly burdensome charge, so that to-day the plea for more and smaller dioceses is admittedly reasonable.

He anticipated also the policy of “alternative use” in liturgies. His own liturgy, produced merely as a type, in an incredibly short time by an incredibly swift writer, was, of course, more or less shaped (through long familiarity of usage of both the Book of Common Prayer and the Assembly's Directory) in his mind before he put pen to paper. The notion that there was some extraordinary presumption or lack of humour in his undertaking this work in fourteen days, arises in the minds of his critics either through ignorance of the actual circumstances or through defective imaginative capacity to comprehend Baxter's mind. In any event, it should be judged, like Bach's prolific music, not by the time it took to

¹ It was an unchivalrous feature of the controversies of the time to bait the Nonconformists by challenging them to produce reasons for their Nonconformity when those reasons would not have been licensed. See *Fasciculus Literarum* (1680), Baxter's First Letter, p. 1.

transfer to score, but by its actual merits. That it has great and outstanding merits was the opinion of no less a judge than Dr. Johnson, an enthusiastic admirer of Baxter.

But what concerns us here to note is that it was offered not as excluding the Book of Common Prayer, but as an alternative use for tender consciences who could not adopt the Book of Common Prayer as it stood. Whatever moderns may think of this principle, it is one that is at least seriously occupying the minds of Anglicans to-day in their own controversies with each other, and it is of some interest to observe that Baxter anticipated it as a possible means of accommodation within a single communion.

But a more radical position was his stand for Catholicism against all sects, a Catholicism not merely Roman or Greek or Anglican, but Christian, and therefore genuinely universal. He saw, as one born out of due time, the vision of a Church whose limits are coterminous only with Christianity itself.

Christianity is our religion. Protesting against Popery is our negation. . . . Christianity is it that we are agreed in, and that is our religion, and nothing but that. Protestancy as such is but our wiping off the dirt. . . . We still profess before men and angels that we own no religion but the Christian religion, nor any church but the Christian church, nor dream of any Catholic Church but one, containing all the true Christians in the world, united in Jesus Christ as the head.¹

There was here no evasion of the further questions, "What is this Christianity?" and "Who are *true* Christians?" He will take no flight into vague and abstract ideals of universality. He devoted volumes to precise and unmistakable answers to these questions. The following from the concluding section of his *Search for the English Schismatic* (1681) may serve as a summary:

If thou would'st escape that *schism* and *dangerous sin* which contenders charge upon one another, the way is short and plain: (1) Understand and stand to thy baptismal vow, and see that thy *belief, love and practice* of known Christianity, according to ^a our Creed, Lord's Prayer and Decalogue, in love to God, thy soul

¹ *Key for Catholicks* (1659), Preface, p. 6. See letter applying for licence in Notes, *post*.

^a It is important to note that by "according to" Baxter rules out a literalist interpretation of the Creed. In his astonishingly acute pamphlet, *Mr. Baxter's Sense of the Articles*, written in answer to the scruples of literalists, he interprets and even rejects almost exactly as do our modernists to-day. See *Collected Works*, Orme, vol. xv. p. 528.

and thy neighbour, in godliness, charity, justice, sobriety, be serious and sincere, and then thou art certainly of that Catholic Church which Christ is the head of and will save; (2) Love all Christians as such, according to the measures of their goodness: and, remembering thy own weakness, pity and bear with the infirmities of the weak, and when others wrangle against them and abuse them, study thou to do them good; (3) Look on all particular churches as members of the universal afore-described—and choose the best thou canst for thy *ordinary communion*. . . . But deny not *occasional communion* with any (though accused by others) further than they force thee to sin or than they separate from Christ. . . . Take them for *sectaries* and *separatists* who forbid thee communion with all that are not of their mind and way in tolerable differences.)

His *Catholick Theologie* (1675) is a heavy folio, forbidding in arrangement, but richly rewarding to anyone who will have patience to read it. It contains, in the Second Book, a remarkable dialogue between a *Sectary* and a *Peacemaker* which treats "of the great errors, sin and danger which many ignorant professors fall into, on pretence of avoiding and abhorring Popery." Baxter, it goes without saying, feared and distrusted "Popery." It is all the more to the credit of his heart that his charity embraced them as Christians, and to the credit of his head that he never under-estimated the formidable nature of their case. He maintains that the sectaries, by their ignorant, unfair and injudicious handling of the real issues, "have occasioned divers Protestants to turn *Papists*." He saw how the quarrels of Protestants among themselves and their lack of tolerance and unity operated on distracted souls. These, in religious and intellectual despair of finding rest elsewhere, wearily gave up the quest and submitted to Rome. Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings? Baxter actually believed that the less reputable Roman Catholics entered the sects to cause dissensions and thereby gather riches from the ships they had helped to wreck through the mutiny of their crews.

Baxter had no fear of the honest atheist. He believed he could convince him by rational discussion. He scorned, but did not evade, the subtler and far more dangerous scepticism, as he regarded it, of the Roman Catholic. For Baxter had himself looked steadily into the abyss of nescience: he had even descended it and found that it was not bottomless. He had returned again to the upper air of the Faith with an extraordinary confidence in the power of the intellect to answer the questionings of the intellect, and with a candour that

acknowledged that in things which he believed to be true some were more certain than others.

His works on the evidences of the Christian religion are very powerful, and their arguments in many respects have lost nothing of their force. Dr. Johnson thought that Baxter's *Reasons of the Christian Religion* (1667) was "the best collection of the evidences of the Christian system." This and the sequel, *More Reasons*, would suffice, apart from all his other writings, to show how radically he had faced the ultimate questions and how deeply and broadly he had based his own orthodoxy. Out of the strength of his argument he can make admissions that would shock some modern believers. He did not believe that the first disciples were infallible, indefectible or sinless. He does not rest on the mere words of Scripture: "Words are but as the body of Scripture, and the sense the soul."¹

As in politics he had argued that God is man's absolute Sovereign King,² and had based on this principle his defence of monarchy and his criticism of democracy, so, in theology, he ascribed "infallibility, primitive and absolute, to God and no other. Therefore, we are certain that *so much is true as is God's word.*"³ He could cheerfully say that "an Aristotle may be more accurate in method, and a Demosthenes, Varro or Cicero in words and phrase than an Apostle."⁴ Having thus disencumbered himself of hampering armour, he leapt like a happy warrior to the combat:

It is one of the usual tricks of Popish deceivers to put on the vizor of an infidel . . . to puzzle men and convince them, that by reasoning they can never attain to satisfaction in these matters: and then to infer "you have no way left but to believe the Church; and we are that Church. If you leave that easy quiet way, you will never come to any certainty."

Why do they not try the same trick about all the difficulties in philosophy, astronomy, physick, history, etc.? For every science and art hath its difficulties. But are not all these as great difficulties to the pope and his prelates as they are to us? But God hath given us a more clear and satisfactory way of the solution of such doubts.⁵

He describes how the lack of candour and understanding in Protestants themselves reacted to fortify Popery. Protestants

¹ *More Reasons*, Collected Works, Orme, vol. xxi. p. 530.

² *A Holy Commonwealth* (1659), p. 18.

³ *More Reasons*, Collected Works, Orme, vol. xxi. pp. 533-4. Italics ours.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 531.

Of the Immortality of the Soul (1682), Preface.

have been so confounded to find partly palpable errors taken for sound doctrine, and sound doctrine railed at as Popery, and partly to see shameful diversity and contentions of all the sects among themselves, that it hath drawn them to think there is no prosperity of the Church and godliness to be expected but where there is unity and concord: and no unity and concord to be hoped for among Protestants; and therefore they must return to Rome.¹

Baxter's way of meeting the Roman case is to give full weight to what he finds true in it and to practise "that love and common justice which is due to the Papists themselves." He speaks with grief of some learned Lutheran preachers who live in drunkenness, and of their lack of the spirit of holiness, and how

they make up all by a fervent preaching against the Papists and Calvinists. Were it as easy to get *faith, hope* and *love*, as to talk against *other men's opinions*, or to call that Popery which is contrary to your own raw conceits, how happy were it for such men.

For Baxter as for the Apostle it was neither circumcision nor uncircumcision that mattered, so much as faith working by love:

They that have a religious zeal for forms and ceremonies, and they that are zealous against them, may be of the same spirit and temper of religions, being both but formalists, though one's formality work for and the other's against such kind of things. And you are not aware that if you are wiser than those that you talk against, you must show it by your works and meekness of wisdom, and that the envious wisdom and zeal which is not from above may work as well by crying down other men's opinions as Popish and anti-christian as in other ways.²

Moreover, he deplored the surrender of the Protestant cause to Rome by tacitly admitting that ancient tradition and continuity told against Protestantism:

What an honour is done to Popery, and what a dishonour to the Reformed churches, when it shall be concluded that all the churches heretofore, even next after the age of the apostles and almost all the present churches, were and are against the doctrine of the Protestants, and on the Papists' side: . . . how many do call that Popery, which the whole current of Greek and Latin Fathers do assert and all the ancient churches owned, and most of all the present churches in the world? ³

How seriously Baxter sought to incorporate elements from historical Catholicism will become evident from the following quotations:

Join not with those men that cast out any ordinance of God

¹ *Catholic Theologie*, Book II. p. 290.

² *Ibid.* p. 292.

³ *Ibid.* p. 294.

because the Papists have abused it. Reformation of corrupted institutions is not by the abolition of them, but by the restoration of them. There are few things in use among the Papists themselves as parts of worship but may lead us up to a good original, or tell us of some real duty which did degenerate into these.¹

To this end he was prepared to go startlingly far. He turned the edge of the Roman plea for the authority of tradition by being more of a traditionalist than the Roman Catholic. So far was he thereby from yielding the argument to Rome that he confidently believed he had given it its "mortal stroak":

Nor does he shrink from a further historical source.

We argue not from mere pretended supernatural infallibility or authority of any, as they do, but from rational evidence of antiquity: so we argue not from a *sect or party* as they do, but from the Universal Church. As far as the whole Church of Christ is of larger extent and greater credit than the Popish party, so far is our tradition more credible than theirs.

Yea, our tradition reacheth farther than the Universal Church: for we take in all rational evidence: even Jews, heathens, and hereticks and persecutors, that bear witness to the matters of fact.²

On the subject of rites and ceremonies he is more conciliatory than one would gather from his *Autobiography* and the general mass of his writings. He saw, for instance, good reasons for prayers for the dead, while recognising their liability to abuse.

We are for the commemoration of the holy lives and sufferings of the saints. . . . Our question is not whether the dead may be prayed for: but what prayers may be made for them.³

More surprisingly still he says:

As for *Images*, we allow the historical use of them, and the setting them up in churches the *Lutherans* allow, and we dislike it only as dangerous and a needless snare, but take not ourselves to be of another church or religion from those that are otherwise minded. No, nor from those that reverence them as they respect the persons whom they signify.⁴

His attitude on ordination and re-ordination will be seen in the following pages. He himself was episcopally ordained and, although there is no evidence that he received anything beyond deacon's orders, he celebrated the Sacrament of Holy Communion, but for his own congregation only. There was never any suggestion of further ordination when he was

¹ *Key for Catholics*, p. 8.

² *Ibid.* p. 160-1.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 97-8.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 163.

offered a bishopric. This question, however, demands minuter research, and it is important to discover how many of the ejected and non-ejected clergy were actually in priest's orders. The case of Reynolds, who accepted, on Baxter's advice, the bishopric of Norwich, throws no light on this, as Reynolds was in priest's orders before the Civil War. It is possible that this fact weighed with Baxter in giving his counsel.

There is, however, no ambiguity about Baxter's own views. They are given at length in his *Five Disputations of Church-Government* (1659), where he devotes a chapter to "The sinfulness of despising or neglecting ordination." His main position is that:

Ordination . . . is God's orderly and ordinary means of regular admittance: and to be sought and used where it may be had (as the solemnising of marriage). And it is a sin to neglect it wilfully and so it is usually necessary. . . . But it is not of absolute necessity, *Necessitate medii ad esse Ministerii*, or to the validity or success of our office and ministrations to the church: nor in cases of necessity, where it cannot be had, is it necessary *necessitate praecepti*. This is the plain truth.¹

He uses the analogy of Baptism in words that should be noted in connection with the offence caused by a misunderstood sermon of his at Kidderminster:²

As Baptism is the open badge of a Christian, so Ordination is the open badge of a minister: and therefore though a man may be a Christian before God without Baptism, yet ordinarily he is not a Christian before the Church without Baptism till he have by some equivalent profession given them satisfaction.³

Elsewhere he develops this by arguing that, as it is a Catholic doctrine that a private man may baptise in extremity, so also an irregular ordination may be valid by reason of extremity.⁴ Nor does he stop with mere irregularity. He pushes the argument home:

If the way of regular ordination fail, God may otherwise (by the Church's necessity and the notorious aptitude of the person) notify his will to the Church, what person they shall receive (as if a layman were cast on the Indian shore, and converted thousands, who could have no ordination), and upon the people's reception or consent that man will be a true pastor.⁵

And he clinches this with the assertion: "It's better that men

¹ *Five Disputations*, p. 149.

² *Post*, p. 28 and note.

³ *Five Disputations*, p. 163.

⁴ *Christian Directory*, iii. p. 89.

⁵ *Ibid.* (1672-3), iii. Quest. 11 (4), p. 788.

should be disorderly saved than orderly damned: and that the Church be disorderly preserved than orderly destroyed." ¹

Hence he is clear that:

Matters of order may possibly vary: and though they are to be observed as far as may be, yet they always give place to the ends and substance of the work, for the ordering whereof they are appointed. . . . Mr. Eliot in *New England* may better ordain a pastor over the Indians converted by him than leave them without, or send to Rome or England for a bishop or for orders.²

He has no quarrel with Episcopacy as such. That the Church should be governed by bishops is for him "a thing that is commonly granted: but the controversy is about the *Species of Episcopacy*: not whether bishops, but *what sort* of bishops, should be the ordinary governors of the Church of Christ."³

Baxter was all the more concerned about not making technical points over the validity of orders in days when travel was difficult, dangerous and slow, because he was exceedingly zealous on behalf of missionary-work. Great praise and gratitude are due to him for the recognition of the importance of this evangelical enterprise, long before it was taken up with any enthusiasm by the churches generally. His deep sincerity in this work may be seen in his truly apostolic correspondence with John Eliot. He laboured to arouse the interest of others and made great personal sacrifices for the cause. The darkness of the unevangelised populations of the globe was an anguish to his mind, not so much because he feared for their future state. Like the early Christian writers, like Justin,⁴ in his *First Apology*, he believed that "Christ's interest and his Spirit's operations and help, extended much farther than men's understanding of him, his undertaking and his future work. No doubt but the eternal Λόγος gave even to Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Seneca, Antonine, Epictetus, Plutarch, etc., what light and mercy they had."⁵ And he would, doubtless, have this thought extended to other "heathens." His chief concern was that, now and here, they should not be deprived

¹ *Five Disputations*, p. 165.

² *Key for Catholicks*, p. 213. Baxter, in a crossed-out passage of the MS. portion of the *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, refers to his own arguments for "ye Validity of ye ordination then performed by Presbyters (though I never medled in ordaining any myselfe)." (Baxter MSS. [Treatises], vol. iii.)

³ *Five Disputations*, pp. 275-6.

⁴ *Apol.*, i. 5; i. 46. Cp. *Clem. Alex.*, Strom., i. 5.

⁵ *More Reasons for the Christian Religion*, Collected Works, Orme, vol. xxi. p. 562. Cp. *Universal Redemption* (Posthumous, 1694), pp. 465-6.

of the full enlightenment and redemption of the Gospel, and of the positive fruits of the Holy Spirit, in love, joy and peace.

It is extremely interesting to compare with this missionary zeal his complementary passion for social and economic welfare here at home. He describes the sufferings of the poor as all but intolerable and warns "rich racking landlords" against provoking such a peasants' rising as had occurred in Germany, where oppression made them hearken to "seducers that bid them endure their slavery no longer." But though he felt with pitying grief the condition of the agriculturists of his day, and though almost his last gesture as he dies and falls back on his pillow is to hand to posterity as a kind of *donatio mortis causa* his *Poor Husbandman's Advocate*, yet not for their poverty merely does he pity them, nor for their coarse fare, nor for their lowly work, nor for aught in their worldly lot so long as it does not damage their health:

But, alas, it is greater cause of pity that they usually want those helps of knowledge and a godly heavenly life and comfortable preparation for and prospect of death that others ordinarily enjoy. They are usually so poor that they cannot have time to read a chapter in the Bible or to pray in their families. They come in weary from their labours so that they are fitter to sleep than to read or pray.¹

The Industrial Revolution has since formed new patterns of our economic life and produced new problems which seem at first sight to have little relation to what troubled Baxter's dying days. But the issues are essentially the same. We live as he lived in the midst of "a dissolving world" and a crumbling civilisation. His main concerns—his main solutions—are those of a noble puritanism in every age, namely, the maintenance of the supremacy of the spiritual, where alone real power and true joys are to be found, and of the full efficiency of the body and the mind, but ever in the interests of the affluence of life itself and of the eternal welfare of the soul.

Who shall bring before us a living portrait of this very human but holy saint of God, that we may see beyond the contradictions of his complex personality his own essential interior unity and behold him as he is? There is one man, and one only, who can do it. This is Baxter himself. He warns us in his *Treatise of Self-Denial*: "Draw not a great picture of a little man," and Grainger, in his *Biographical History*, with

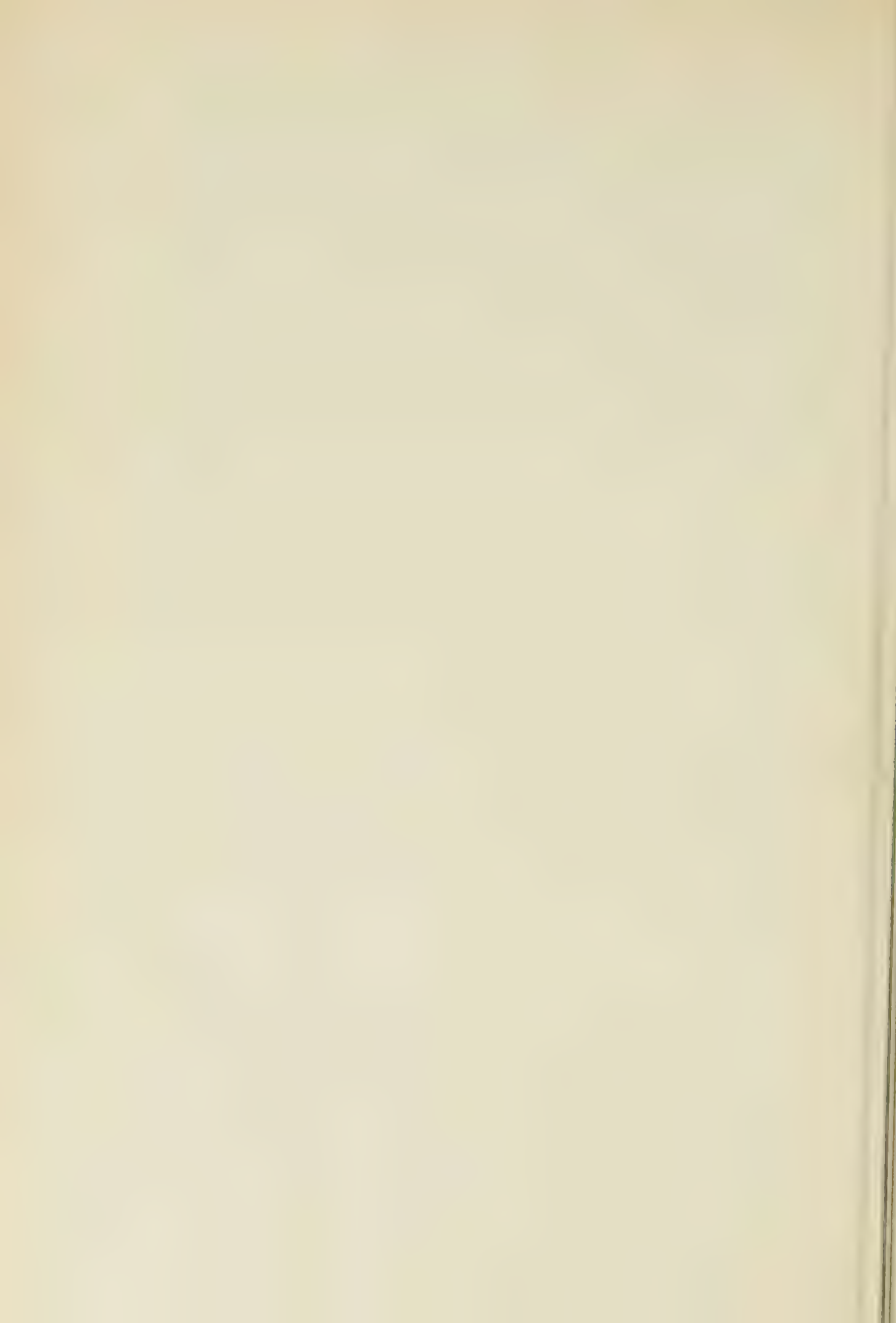
¹ *The Poor Husbandman's Advocate*, Baxter MSS. (Treatises), vol. iii.

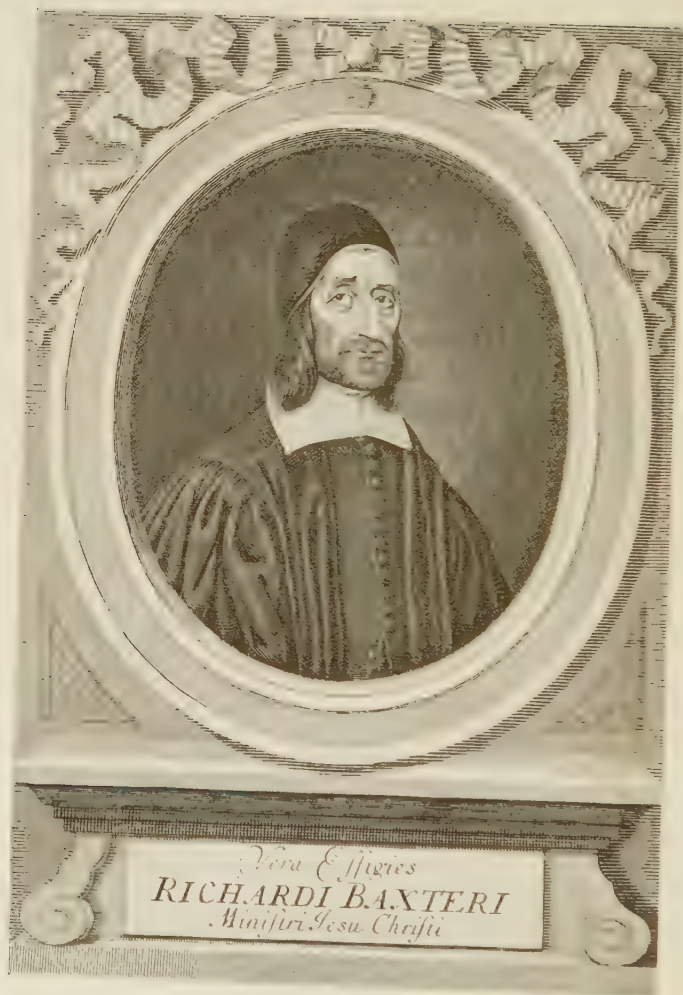
this remark perhaps in his mind, inverts it when he says: "Men of his size are not to be drawn in miniature. His portrait, in full proportion, is his *Narrative of his own Life and Times*." To that narrative, as now presented in the following pages, the reader may go and form his own estimate. Yet the writer of this Introduction may perhaps be indulged the expression of his own judgment that he is the most vital and significant witness of his own age to ours, that he has not yet, though there are many signs of awakening interest, come to his own, and that the words used by him at his last trial are prophetic, however long deferred their fulfilment:

"THESE THINGS WILL SURELY BE UNDERSTOOD ONE DAY."

J. M. LLOYD THOMAS.

1925.





THE FRONTISPIECE ENGRAVING TO THE FOLIO, "RELIQUIÆ
BAXTERIANÆ," 1696.

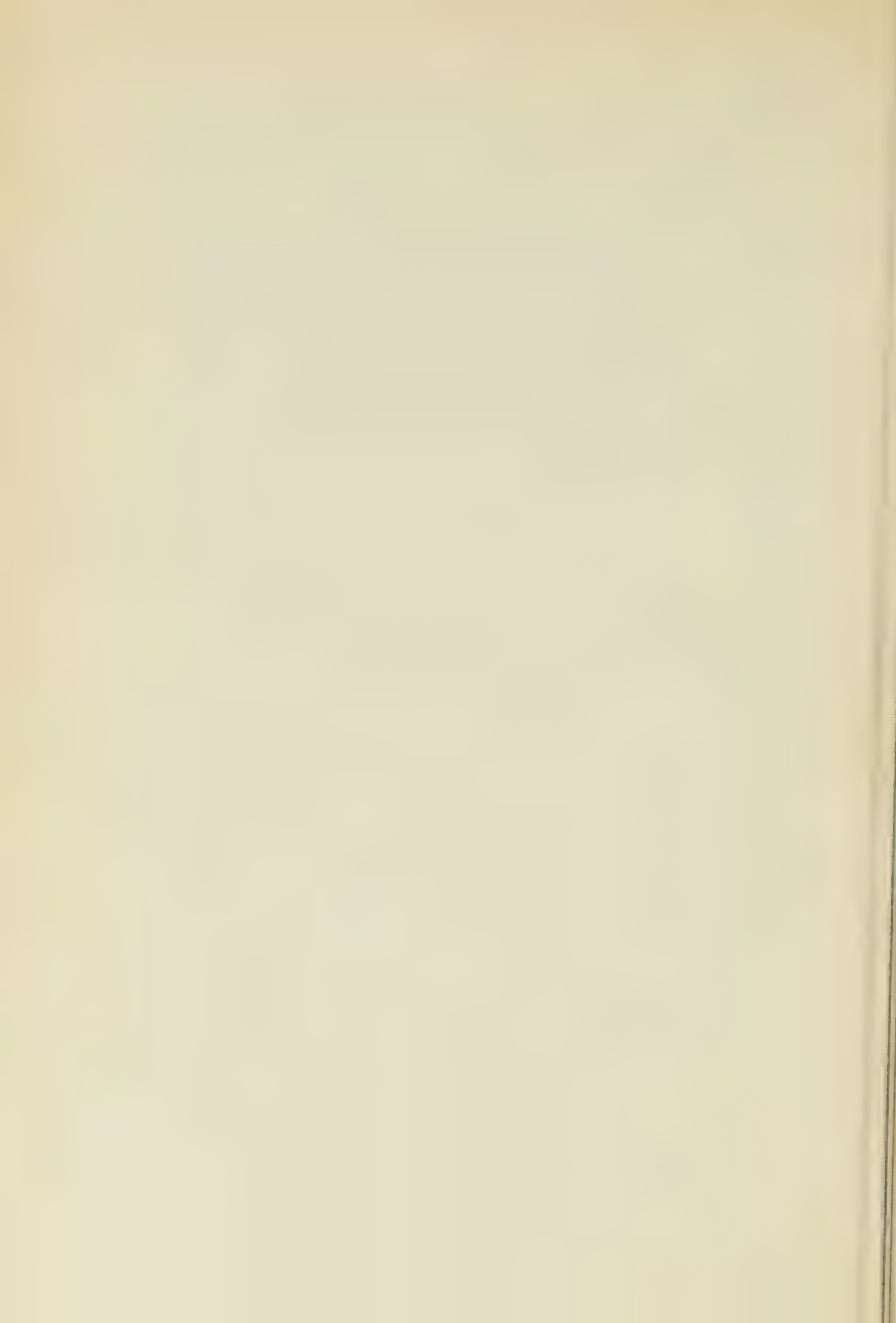
Reliquiæ Baxterianæ:
OR,
Mr. RICHARD BAXTER'S
NARRATIVE
OF
The most Memorable Passages
OF HIS
L I F E
AND
T I M E S.

Faithfully Publish'd from his own Original Manuscript,
By MATTHEW SYLVESTER.

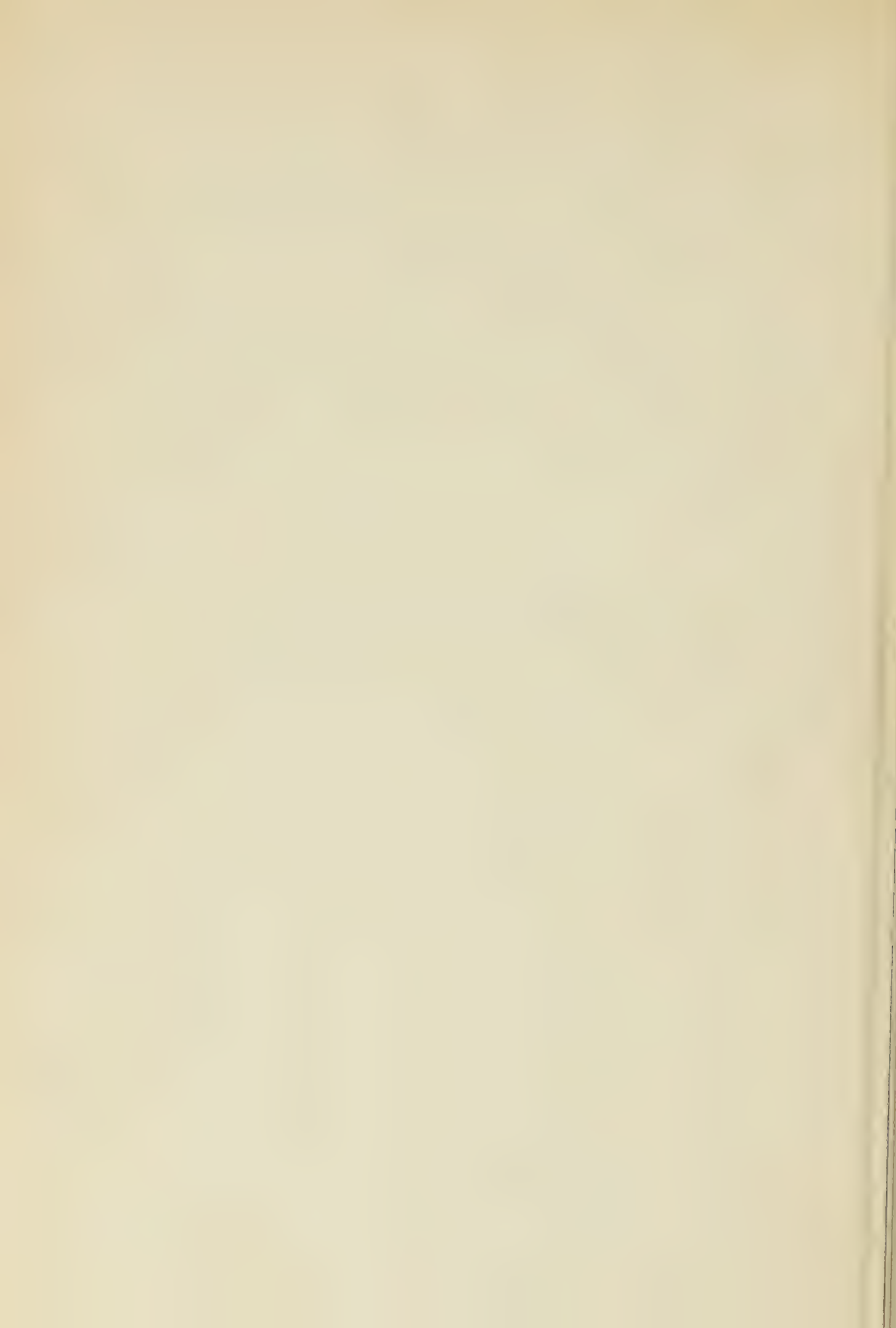
Mihi quidem nulli satis Eruditi videntur quibus nostra ignota sunt.
Cic. de Finib. lib. 1.

*Quibus [ergo] rectè dem, non prætermittam—— Sic habeto, me,
cum illo re | sæpe communicatâ, ac illius ad te sententiâ atque
authoritate Scribere | —— Cic. Epist. 7. ad Lentul. Lib. 1.*

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PART ONE



THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF RICHARD BAXTER

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

BIRTH AND BOYHOOD

*Incompetent clergy and drunken teachers—Sins of youth—
Morrice dancers—Concern for religion—Ludlow Castle
—Early studies—Symptoms of disease—At court.*

1615-1633

MY father's name was Richard (the son of Richard) Baxter: his habitation and estate at a village called Eaton Constantine, a mile from the Wrekin Hill, and above half a mile from Severn River and five miles from Shrewsbury in Shropshire; a village most pleasantly and healthfully situate. My mother's name was Beatrice, the daughter of Richard Adeney of Rowton, a village near High Ercall, the Lord Newport's seat, in the same county. There I was born A.D. 1615, on the 12th of November, being the Lord's-day, in the morning at the time of divine worship, and baptised at High Ercall the 19th day following. And there I lived from my parents with my grandfather till I was near ten years of age, and then was taken home.

My father had only the competent estate of a freeholder, free from the temptations of poverty and riches; but having been addicted to gaming in his youth, and his father before him, it was so entangled by debts that it occasioned some excess of worldly cares before it was freed.

We lived in a country that had but little preaching at all. In the village where I was born there was four readers successively in six years time, ignorant men, and two of them immoral in their lives, who were all my schoolmasters. In the village where my father lived there was a reader of about eighty years of age that never preached, and had two churches about twenty miles distant. His eyesight

failing him, he said Common Prayer without book; but for the reading of the psalms and chapters he got a common thresher and day-labourer one year, and a tailor another year (for the clerk could not read well); and at last he had a kinsman of his own (the excellentest stage-player in all the country, and a good gamester and good fellow) that got Orders and supplied one of his places. After him another younger kinsman, that could write and read, got Orders. And at the same time another neighbour's son that had been a while at school turned minister, one who would needs go further than the rest, and ventured to preach (and after got a living in Staffordshire), and when he had been a preacher about twelve or sixteen years he was fain to give over, it being discovered that his Orders were forged by the first ingenious stage-player. After him another neighbour's son took Orders, when he had been a while an attorney's clerk, and a common drunkard, and tumbled himself into so great poverty that he had no other way to live. It was feared that he and more of them came by their Orders the same way with the forementioned person. These were the schoolmasters of my youth (except two of them) who read Common Prayer on Sundays and Holy-Days, and taught school and tumbled on the week-days, and whipped the boys, when they were drunk, so that we changed them very oft. Within a few miles about us were near a dozen more ministers that were near eighty years old apiece, and never preached; poor ignorant readers, and most of them of scandalous lives. Only three or four constant competent preachers lived near us, and those (though conformable all save one) were the common marks of the people's obloquy and reproach, and any that had but gone to hear them, when he had no preaching at home, was made the derision of the vulgar rabble under the odious name of a Puritan.

But though we had no better teachers it pleased God to instruct and change my father, by the bare reading of the Scriptures in private, without either preaching or godly company, or any other books but the Bible. And God made him the instrument of my first convictions, and approbation of a holy life, as well as of my restraint from the grosser sort of lives. When I was very young his serious speeches of God and the life to come possessed me with a

fear of sinning. When I was but near ten years of age, being at school at High Ercall, we had leave to play on the day of the king's coronation; and at two of the clock in the afternoon on that day there happened an earthquake, which put all the people into a fear, and somewhat possessed them with awful thoughts of the dreadful God. (I make no commentary on the time, nor do I know certainly whether it were in other countries.)

At first my father set me to read the historical part of the Scripture, which suiting with my nature greatly delighted me; and though all that time I neither understood nor relished much the doctrinal part and mystery of redemption, yet it did me good by acquainting me with the matters of fact, drawing me on to love the Bible and to search by degrees into the rest.

But though my conscience would trouble me when I sinned, yet divers sins I was addicted to, and oft committed against my conscience; which for the warning of others I will confess here to my shame.

1. I was much addicted, when I feared correction, to lie, that I might scape.

2. I was much addicted to the excessive gluttonous eating of apples and pears; which I think laid the foundation of that imbecility and flatulency of my stomach which caused the bodily calamities of my life.

3. To this end, and to concur with naughty boys that gloried in evil, I have oft gone into other men's orchards and stolen their fruit, when I had enough at home.

4. I was somewhat excessively addicted to play, and that with covetousness, for money.

5. I was extremely bewitched with a love of romances, fables and old tales, which corrupted my affections and lost my time.

6. I was guilty of much idle foolish chat, and imitation of boys in scurrilous foolish words and actions (though I durst not swear).

7. I was too proud of my masters' commendations for learning, who all of them fed my pride, making me seven or eight years the highest in the school, and boasting of me to others, which, though it furthered my learning, yet helped not my humility.

8. I was too bold and unreverent towards my parents.

These were my sins, which in my childhood conscience troubled me < with > for a great while before they were overcome.

In the village where I lived the reader read the Common Prayer briefly, and the rest of the day even till dark night almost, except eating-time, was spent in dancing under a maypole and a great tree not far from my father's door, where all the town did meet together. And though one of my father's own tenants was the piper, he could not restrain him nor break the sport. So that we could not read the Scripture in our family without the great disturbance of the tabor and pipe and noise in the street. Many times my mind was inclined to be among them, and sometimes I broke loose from conscience and joined with them; and the more I did it the more I was inclined to it. But when I heard them call my father Puritan it did much to cure me and alienate me from them; for I considered that my father's exercise of reading the Scripture was better than theirs, and would surely be better thought on by all men at the last; and I considered what it was for that he and others were thus derided. . . .

The chiefest help that I had for all my learning in the country schools was with Mr. John Owen, schoolmaster at the free-school at Wroxeter, to whom I went next, who lived in Sir Richard Newport's house (afterward Lord Newport) at Eyton, and taught school at that ancient Uriconium (where the ruins and old coin confirm those histories which make it an ancient city in the Romans' times).

The present Lord Newport and his brother were then my schoolfellows, in a lower form, and Dr. Richard Allestree, now Doctor of the Chair in Oxford, Canon of Christ's-Church, and Provost of Eton College; of whom I remember that when my master set him up into the lower end of the highest form, where I had long been chief, I took it so ill that I talked of leaving the school; whereupon my master gravely, but very tenderly, rebuked my pride, and gave me for my theme: *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*.

About that time it pleased God of his wonderful mercy to open my eyes with a clearer insight into the concerns and case of my own soul, and to touch my heart with a livelier feeling of things spiritual than ever I had found before. And it was by the means and in the order following:

stirring up my conscience more against me, by robbing an orchard or two with rude boys, than it was before; and, bringing me under some more conviction for my sin, a poor day-labourer in the town (he that I before mentioned, that was wont to read in the church for the old parson) had an old torn book which he lent my father, which was called *Bunny's Resolution* (being written by Parsons the Jesuit, and corrected by Edm. Bunny). . . And in the reading of this book (when I was about fifteen years of age) it pleased God to awaken my soul. . .

Yet whether sincere conversion began now, or before, or after, I was never able to this day to know; for I had before had some love to the things and people which were good, and a restraint from other sins except those forementioned; and so much from those, that I seldom committed most of them, and when I did, it was with great reluctancy. . .

And about that time it pleased God that a poor pedlar came to the door that had ballads and some good books; and my father bought of him Dr. Sibb's *Bruised Reed*. This also I read, and found it suited to my state and seasonably sent me. . . .

When I was ready for the university my master drew me into another way which kept me thence, where were my vehement desires. He had a friend at Ludlow, Chaplain to the Council there, called Mr. Richard Wickstead; whose place having allowance from the king (who maintaineth the house) for one to attend him, he told my master that he was purposed to have a scholar fit for the university; and having but one, would be better to him than any tutor in the university could be. Whereupon my master persuaded me to accept the offer, and told me it would be better than the university to me. . . He never read to me, nor used any savoury discourse of godliness; only he loved me, and allowed me books and time enough: so that as I had no considerable helps from him in my studies, so had I no considerable hindrance.

And though the house was great (there being four judges, the King's Attorney, the Secretary, the Clerk of the Fines, with all their servants, and all the Lord President's servants and many more), and though the town was full of temptations, through the multitude of persons (counsellors, attorneys, officers and clerks), and much given to

tippling and excess, it pleased God not only to keep me from them, but also to give me one intimate companion, who was the greatest help to my seriousness in religion that ever I had before, and was a daily watchman over my soul. We walked together, we read together, we prayed together, and when we could we lay together. . . He was the first that ever I heard pray *ex tempore* (out of the pulpit), and that taught me so to pray. And his charity and liberality were equal to his zeal, so that God made him a great means of my good, who had more knowledge than he, but a colder heart.

Yet before we had been two years acquainted he fell once and a second time by the power of temptation into a degree of drunkenness, which so terrified him upon the review (especially after the second time) that he was near to despair, and went to good ministers with sad confessions. And when I had left the house and his company, he fell into it again and again so oft that at last his conscience could have no relief or ease but in changing his judgment and disowning the teachers and doctrines which had restrained him. . . And the last I heard of him was that he was grown a fuddler and railer at strict men; but whether God recovered him, or what became of him, I cannot tell.

From Ludlow Castle, after a year and a half, I returned to my father's house, and by that time my old schoolmaster, Mr. John Owen, was sick of a consumption (which was his death); and the Lord Newport desired me to teach that school till he either recovered or died (resolving to take his brother after him if he died); which I did, about a quarter of a year or more.

After that old Mr. Francis Garbett (the faithful, learned minister at Wroxeter) for about a month read logic to me, and provoked me to a closer course of study, which yet was greatly interrupted by my bodily weakness and the troubled condition of my soul. For being in expectation of death by a violent cough, with spitting of blood, etc., of two years' continuance, supposed to be a deep degree of a consumption, I was yet more awakened to be serious and solicitous about my soul's everlasting state; and I came so short of that sense and seriousness which a matter of such infinite weight required, that I was in many years' doubt

of my sincerity, and thought I had no spiritual life at all. . . .

Thus was I long kept with the calls of approaching death at one ear and the questionings of a doubtful conscience at the other; and since then I have found that this method of God's was very wise, and no other was so like to have tended to my good. . . .

It set me upon that method of my studies which since then I have found the benefit of, though at the time I was not satisfied with myself. It caused me first to seek God's Kingdom and his righteousness, and most to mind the one thing needful; and to determine first of my ultimate end; by which I was engaged to choose out and prosecute all other studies but¹ as meant to that end. Therefore divinity was not only carried on with the rest of my studies with an equal hand, but always had the first and chiefest place. . . And by that means all that I read did stick the better in my memory, and also less of my time was lost by lazy intermissions (but my bodily infirmities always caused me to lose or spend much of it in motion and corporal exercises, which was sometimes by walking, and sometimes at the plough and such country labours).

But one loss I had by this method which hath proved irreparable: that I missed that part of learning which stood at the greatest distance (in my thoughts) from my ultimate end (though no doubt but remotely it may be a valuable means), and I could never since find time to get it. Besides the Latin tongue and but a mediocrity in Greek (with an inconsiderable trial at the Hebrew long after), I had no great skill in languages. . . And for the mathematics, I was an utter stranger to them, and never could find in my heart to divert any studies that way. But in order to the knowledge of divinity my inclination was most to logic and metaphysics, with that part of physics which treateth of the soul, contenting myself at first with a slighter study of the rest. And these had my labour and delight, which occasioned me (perhaps too soon) to plunge myself very early into the study of controversies, and to read all the Schoolmen I could get; for next practical divinity, no books so suited with my disposition as Aquinas, Scotus, Durandus, Ockam and their disciples; because I

¹ = only.

thought they narrowly searched after truth and brought things out of the darkness of confusion; for I could never from my first studies endure confusion. . . I never thought I understood any thing till I could anatomise it and see the parts distinctly, and the conjunction of the parts as they make up the whole. Distinction and method seemed to me of that necessity, that without them I could not be said to know; and the disputes which forsook them or abused them seem but as incoherent dreams.

And as for those doubts of my own salvation, which exercised me many years, the chiefest causes of them were these:

1. Because I could not distinctly trace the workings of the Spirit upon my heart in that method which Mr. Bolton, Mr. Hooker, Mr. Rogers and other divines describe; nor knew the time of my conversion, being wrought on by the forementioned degrees. But since then I understood that the soul is in too dark and passionate a plight at first to be able to keep an exact account of the order of its own operations. . .

2. My second doubt was as aforesaid, because of the hardness of my heart or want of such lively apprehensions of things spiritual which I had about things corporal. And though I still groan under this as my sin and want, yet I now perceive that a soul in flesh doth work so much after the manner of the flesh that it much desireth sensible apprehensions; but things spiritual and distant are not so apt to work upon them, and to stir the passions, as things present and sensible are; . . and that this is the ordinary state of a believer.

3. My next doubt was lest education and fear had done all that ever was done upon my soul, and regeneration and love were yet to seek; because I had found convictions from my childhood, and found more fear than love in all my duties and restraints.

But I afterward perceived that education is God's ordinary way for the conveyance of his grace, and ought no more to be set in opposition to the Spirit than the preaching of the Word; and that it was the great mercy of God to begin with me so soon. . . . And I understood that though fear without love be not a state of saving grace, . . the soul of a believer groweth up by degrees from the more

troublesome (but safe) operations of fear to the more high and excellent operations of complacential love. . . . And I found that my hearty love of the Word of God, and of the servants of God, and my desires to be more holy, and especially the hatred of my heart for loving God no more, and my love to love him and be pleasing to him was not without some love to himself, though it worked more sensibly on his nearer image. . .

But I understood at last that God breaketh not all men's hearts alike. . . .

And it much increased my peace when God's providence called me to the comforting of many others that had the same complaints. While I answered their doubts I answered my own; and the charity which I was constrained to exercise for them redounded to myself and insensibly abated my fears and procured me an increase of quietness of mind.

And yet, after all, I was glad of probabilities instead of full undoubted certainties; and to this very day, though I have no such degree of doubtfulness as is any great trouble to my soul or procureth any great disquieting fears, yet cannot I say that I have such a certainty of my own sincerity in grace as excludeth all doubts and fears of the contrary. . . .

And because the case of my body had a great operation upon my soul . . I shall here together give you a brief account of the most of my afflictions of that kind. .

I was naturally of a sound constitution, but very thin and lean and weak, and especially of a great debility of the nerves. . . Consumptions then common in the country, I was much afraid of a consumption. . . .

To recite a catalogue of my symptoms and pains, from head to feet, would be a tedious interruption to the reader. I shall therefore only say this, that the symptoms and effects of my general indisposition were very terrible, . . . which I then ascribed to such causes as I have since lived to see myself mistaken in; for I am now fully satisfied that all proceeded from latent stones in my reins, occasioned by unsuitable diet in my youth.

And yet two wonderful mercies I had from God:

1. That I was never overwhelmed with real melancholy. . . .

2. The second mercy which I met with was that my

pains, though daily and almost continual, did not very much disable me from my duty; but I could study, and preach and walk almost as well as if I had been free. . . .

My chiefest remedies are:

1. Temperance as to quantity and quality of food. . . .
2. Exercise till I sweat. . . .
3. A constant extrinsic heat by a great fire, which may keep me still near to a sweat, if not in it (for I am seldom well at ease but in a sweat).
4. Beer as hot as my throat will endure, drunk all at once, to make me sweat.

These are the means which God hath used to draw out my days and give me ease (with one herb inwardly taken). . .

About the eighteenth year of my age Mr. Wickstead, with whom I had lived at Ludlow, had almost persuaded me to lay by all my preparations for the ministry and to go to London and get acquaintance at court and get some office as being the only rising way. I had no mind of his counsel who had helped me no better before; yet because that they knew that he loved me, and they had no great inclination to my being a minister, my parents accepted of his motion. He told them that if I would go up and live a while with Sir Henry Herbert, then Master of the Revels, he would quickly set me in a rising way.

I would not be disobedient, but went up and stayed at Whitehall with Sir H. H. about a month. But I had quickly enough of the court. When I saw a stage-play instead of a sermon on the Lord's-days in the afternoon, and saw what course was there in fashion, and heard little preaching but what was as to one part against the Puritans, I was glad to be gone. And at the same time it pleased God that my mother fell sick and desired my return; and so I resolved to bid farewell to those kind of employments and expectations.

CHAPTER II

THE RISING STORM

*Dice and the devil—Ordination—Ship-money and religion
—Dudley—Bridgnorth—Kidderminster.*

1633-1641

WHILE I was in London I fell into acquaintance with a sober, godly, understanding apprentice of Mr. Philemon Stephens the bookseller, whose name was Humphrey Blunden (who is since turned an extraordinary chemist, and got Jacob Behmen his books translated and printed), whom I very much loved, and who by his consolatory letters and directions for books did afterwards do me the offices of an useful friend.

When I was going home again into the country about Christmas Day, the greatest snow began that hath been in this age, which continued thence till Easter, at which some places had it many yards deep; and before, it was a very hard frost, which necessitated me to frost-nail my horse twice or thrice a day. On the road I met a waggon loaded, where I had no passage by but on the side of a bank, which as I passed over, all my horse's feet slipped from under him, and all the girths brake, and so I was cast just before the waggon wheel, which had gone over me but that it pleased God that suddenly the horses stopped without any discernible cause till I was recovered; which commanded me to observe the mercy of my protector.

This mindeth me of some other dangers and deliverances which I passed over. At seventeen years of age, as I rode out on a great unruly horse for pleasure, which was wont on a sudden to get the bit in his teeth and set on running, as I was in a field of high ground, there being on the other side a quickset hedge a very deep narrow lane about a storey's height below me, suddenly the horse got the bridle as aforesaid and set on running, and in the midst of his running unexpectedly turned aside and leaped over the

top of the hedge into that deep lane. I was somewhat before him at the ground, and as the mire saved me from the hurt beneath, so it pleased God that the horse never touched me, but he light with two feet on one side of me and two on the other, though the place made it marvellous how his feet could fall besides me.

While I look back to this, it maketh me remember how God at that time did cure my inclination to gaming. About seventeen years of age, being at Ludlow Castle, where many idle gentlemen had little else to do, I had a mind to learn to play at tables, and the best gamester in the house undertook to teach me. As I remember, the first or second game, when he had so much the better that it was an hundred to one, besides the difference of our skills, the standers-by laughed at me, as well as he, for not giving it up, and told me the game was lost. I knew no more but that it was not lost till all my table-men were lost, and would not give it over till then. He told me that he would lay me an hundred to one of it, and in good earnest laid me down ten shillings to my sixpence. As soon as ever the money was down, whereas he told me that there was no possibility of my game but by one cast often, I had every cast the same I wished, and he had every one according to my desire, so that by that time one could go four or five times about the room his game was gone, which put him in so great an admiration¹ that I took the hint, and believed that the devil had the ruling of the dice, and did it to entice me on to be a gamester. And so I gave him his ten shillings again, and resolved I would never more play at tables whilst I lived.

But to return to the place where I left. When I came home from London I found my mother in extremity of pain, and spent that winter in the hearing of her heart-piercing groans (shut up in the great snow which many that went abroad did perish in) till on May the roth she died.

At Kidderminster, the town being in want of fire went all to shovel the way over the heath to Stourbridge, from whence their coals come; and so great and sudden a storm of snow fell as overwhelmed them, so that some perished in it, and others saved their lives by getting into a little

¹ = wonder.

cot that standeth on the heath, and others escaped home with much ado.

Above a year after the death of my mother, my father married a woman of great sincerity in the fear of God, Mary, the daughter of Sir Tho. Hunkes, whose holiness, mortification, contempt of the world and fervent prayer (in which she spent a great part of her life) have been so exceeding exemplary as made her a special blessing to our family, an honour to religion, and an honourable pattern to those that knew her. She lived to be ninety-six years old.

From the age of twenty-one till near twenty-three, my weakness was so great that I expected not to live above a year; and my own soul being under the serious apprehension of the matters of another world, I was exceeding desirous to communicate those apprehensions to such ignorant, presumptuous, careless sinners as the world aboundeth with. . . I knew that the want of academical honours and degrees was like to make me contemptible with the most, and consequently hinder the success of my endeavours. But yet, expecting to be so quickly in another world, the great concernments of miserable souls did prevail with me against all these impediments; and being conscious of a thirsty desire of men's conversion and salvation, and of some competent persuading faculty of expression, which fervent affections might help to actuate, I resolved that if one or two souls only might be won to God it would easily recompense all the dishonour which for want of titles I might undergo from men. . . .

And I was so foolish as to think that I had so much to say, and of such convincing evidence for a godly life, that men were scarce able to withstand it; not considering what a blind and senseless rock the heart of an obdurate sinner is, and that old Adam is too strong for young Luther (as he said). .

Till this time I was satisfied in the matter of Conformity. Whilst I was young I had never been acquainted with any that were against it or that questioned it. . .

At last, at about twenty years of age, I became acquainted with Mr. Simmonds, Mr. Cradock and other very zealous godly Nonconformists in Shrewsbury and the adjoining parts, whose fervent prayers and savoury conference and holy lives did profit me much. And when I understood that they

were people prosecuted by the bishops, I found much prejudice arise in my heart against those that persecuted them, and thought those that silenced and troubled such men could not be the genuine followers of the Lord of Love.

But yet I resolved that I would study the point, as well as I was able, before I would be confident on either side. . . .

Hereupon, when I thought of Ordination, I had no scruple at all against subscription. And yet so precipitant and rash was I that I had never once read over the Book of Ordination, which was one to which I was to subscribe; nor half read over the Book of Homilies, nor exactly weighed the Book of Common Prayer, nor was I of sufficient understanding to determine confidently in some controverted points in the Thirty-nine Articles. But my teachers and my books having caused me in general to think the Conformists had the better cause, I kept out all particular scruples by that opinion.

At that time old Mr. Richard Foley, of Stourbridge in Worcestershire, had recovered some alienated lands at Dudley, which had been left to charitable uses, and added something of his own, and built a convenient new school-house, and was to choose his first schoolmaster and usher. By the means of James Berry (who lived in the house with me, and had lived with him) he desired me to accept it. I thought it not an inconvenient condition for my entrance, because I might also preach up and down in places that were most ignorant, before I presumed to take a pastoral charge (to which I had no inclination). So to Dudley I went, and Mr. Foley and James Berry going with me to Worcester at the time of ordination, I was ordained by the bishop, and had a licence to teach school, for which (being examined) I subscribed.

Being settled (with an usher) in the new school at Dudley, and living in the house of Mr. Richard Foley, Junior, I there preached my first public sermon in the upper parish church; and afterwards preached in the villages about, and there had occasion to fall afresh upon the study of Conformity. . . .

And the result of all my studies was as followeth: kneeling I thought lawful, and all mere circumstances determined by the magistrate, which God in nature or Scripture hath

determined of only in the general. The surplice I more doubted of; but more inclined to think it lawful; and though I purposed, while I doubted, to forbear it till necessity lay upon me, yet could I not have justified the forsaking of my ministry for it (though I never wore it to this day). The ring in marriage I made no scruple about. The cross in baptism I thought Dr. Ames proved unlawful; and though I was not without some doubting in the point, yet because I most inclined to judge it unlawful, never once used it to this day. A form of prayer and liturgy I judged to be lawful, and in some cases lawfully imposed; our liturgy in particular I judged to have much disorder and defectiveness in it, but nothing which should make the use of it, in the ordinary public worship, to be unlawful to them that have not liberty to do better. Discipline I wanted in the Church, and saw the sad effects of its neglect; but I did not then understand that the very frame of diocesan prelacy excluded it, but thought it had been only the bishops' personal neglects. Subscription I began to judge unlawful, and saw that I sinned by temerity in what I did. For though I could still use the Common Prayer, and was not yet against diocesans, yet to subscribe, *ex animo*, that there is nothing in the three books contrary to the Word of God was that which, if it had been to do again, I durst not do. So that subscription, and the cross in baptism, and the promiscuous giving of the Lord's Supper to all drunkards, swearers, fornicators, scorners at godliness, etc., that are not excommunicate by a bishop or chancellor that is out of their acquaintance—these three were all that I now became a Nonconformist to.

But most of this I kept to myself. I daily disputed against the Nonconformists, for I found their censoriousness and inclinations towards separation (in the weaker sort of them) to be a threatening evil, and contrary to Christian charity on one side, as persecution is on the other. . . But I found that their sufferings from the bishops were the great impediment of my success, and that he that will blow the coals must not wonder if some sparks do fly in his face; and that to persecute men and then call them to charity is like whipping children to make them give over crying. . . I saw that he that will be loved, must love; and he that rather chooseth to be more

feared than loved, must expect to be hated, or loved but diminutively. And he that will have children must be a father; and he that will be a tyrant must be contented with slaves.

In this town of Dudley I lived (not a twelvemonth) in much comfort, amongst a poor tractable people, lately famous for drunkenness but commonly more ready to hear God's Word with submission and reformation than most places where I have come. . . .

When I had been but three-quarters of a year at Dudley I was by God's very gracious providence invited to Bridgnorth, the second town of Shropshire, to preach there as assistant to the worthy pastor of that place. As soon as I heard the place described, I perceived it was the fittest for me; for there was just such employment as I desired and could submit to, without that which I scrupled, and with some probability of peace and quietness.

The minister of the place was Mr. William Madstard, a grave and severe ancient divine, very honest and conscionable and an excellent preacher, but somewhat afflicted with want of maintenance, and much more with a dead-hearted unprofitable people. . . The place is privileged from all episcopal jurisdiction, except the archbishop's triennial visitation. There are six parishes together, two in the town and four in the country, that have all this privilege. At Bridgnorth they have an Ordinary of their own who, as an official, keepeth a constant ecclesiastical court, having the jurisdiction of those six parishes. This reverend and good man, Mr. Madstard, was both pastor and official, the place usually going along with that of the preacher of that town (though separable). By which means I had a very full congregation to preach to, and a freedom from all those things which I scrupled or thought unlawful. I often read the Common Prayer before I preached, both on the Lord's-days and Holy-days, but I never administered the Lord's Supper, nor ever baptised any child with the sign of the cross, nor ever wore the surplice, nor was ever put to appear at any bishop's court.

But the people proved a very ignorant, dead-hearted people. . . Though I was in the fervour of my affections, and never anywhere preached with more vehement desires of men's conversion . . yet with the generality an

applause of the preacher was most of the success of the sermon which I could hear of; and their tippling and ill company and dead-heartedness quickly drowned all.

Whilst I here exercised the first labours of my ministry, two several assaults did threaten my expulsion. The one was a new oath which was made by the Convocation, commonly called the *Et cætera* oath, for it was to swear us all, *That we would never consent to the alteration of the present government of the Church by archbishops, bishops, deans, archdeacons, etc.* This cast the ministers throughout England into a division and new disputes. . . .

The ministers of the country met together at Bridgnorth to debate this business, that they might have no division; and some few were for the oath, but more against it. This put me upon deeper thoughts of the point of Episcopacy, and of the English frame of Church government, than ever I had before; and now I had the opportunity of seeing some books which I never had before. . . . And though I found not sufficient evidence to prove all kind of Episcopacy unlawful, yet I was much satisfied that the English diocesan frame was guilty of the corruption of churches and ministry, and of the ruin of the true Church discipline, and substituting a heterogeneous thing in its stead.

And thus the *Et cætera* oath, which was imposed on us for the unalterable subjecting of us to diocesans, was a chief means to alienate me and many others from it. For now our drowsy mindlessness of that subject was shaken off by their violence; and we that thought it best to follow our business and live in quietness and let the bishops alone, were roused by the terrors of an oath to look about us and understand what we did. . . .

And it fell out that at the same time when we were thus roused up in England, or a little before, the Scots were also awakened in Scotland; for when all was quiet there under a more moderate Episcopacy than we had then in England (though that nation had been used to Presbytery), a new Common Prayer Book (that is, the English one with some few alterations) was framed, and imposed on the people of Scotland, who having not been used to that way of worship, one woman in Edinburgh cried out in the church, "Popery, popery," and threw her stool at the

priest; and others imitated her presently, and drove him out of the church; and this little spark set all Scotland quickly in a flame. . . Hereupon they all entered into a national covenant, to the same purpose as formerly that nation had done, but they did it without the king's authority. The Oath or Covenant was against Popery and prelacy and superstition, and to uphold the Gospel and Reformation. The Aberdeen doctors dissented from the Covenant, and many writings passed on both sides between the Covenanters and them, till at last the ensuing wars did turn the debates to another strain.

It fell out unhappily that at the same time, while the Scots were thus discontented, the king had imposed a tax here, called ship-money, as for the strengthening of the navy; which being done without consent of parliament, made a wonderful murmuring all over the land, especially among the country nobility and gentry; for they took it as the overthrow of the fundamental laws or constitution of the kingdom, and of parliaments, and of all propriety.¹ . . .

The poor ploughmen understood but little of these matters; but a little would stir up their discontent when money was demanded. But it was the more intelligent part of the nation that were the great complainers. Insomuch that some of them denied to pay the ship-money, and put the sheriffs to distrain; the sheriffs, though afraid of a future parliament, yet did it in obedience to the king. Mr. Hampden and the Lord Say brought it to a suit, where Mr. Oliver St. John and other lawyers boldly pleaded the people's cause. The king had before called all the judges to give their opinions whether in a case of need he might impose such a tax or not. And all of them gave their opinion for the affirmative, except Judge Hatton and Judge Crook. The judgment passed for the king against Mr. Hampden; but this made the matter much more talk² of throughout the land, and considered of by those that thought not much of the importance of it before. . .

The Scots came with an army, and the king's army met them near Newcastle; but the Scots came on till an agreement was made, and a parliament called; and the Scots went home again.

But shortly after, this parliament so displeased the king

¹ = property.

² ? talked.

that he dissolved it, and the war against the Scots was again undertaken (to which, besides others, the Papists by the queen's means did voluntarily contribute); whereupon the Scots complain of evil counsels and Papists as the cause of their renewed dangers, and again raise an army and come into England. And the English at York petition the king for a parliament, and once more it is resolved on, and an agreement made, but neither the Scottish nor English army disbanded. And thus began the Long Parliament, as it was after called.

The *Et cætera* oath was the first thing that threatened me at Bridgnorth; and the second was the passage of the Earl of Bridgwater, Lord President of the Marches of Wales, through the town in his journey from Ludlow to the king in the north. For his coming being on Saturday evening, the most malicious persons of the town went to him, and told him that Mr. Madstard and I did not sign with the cross, nor wear the surplice, nor pray against the Scots. . The Lord President told them that he would himself come to church on the morrow, and see whether we would do these things or not. Mr. Madstard went away, and left Mr. Swain (the reader) and myself in the danger. But after he had spoken for his dinner, and was ready to go to church, the Lord President suddenly changed his purpose, and went away on the Lord's-day as far as Lichfield, requiring the accusers and the bailiffs to send after him to inform him what we did. On the Lord's-day at evening they sent after him to Lichfield to tell him that we did not conform; but though they boasted of no less than the hanging of us, they received no other answer from him but that he had not the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and therefore could not meddle with us; but if he had, he should take such order in the business as were fit. And the bailiffs and accusers had no more wit than to read his letter to me, that I might know how they were baffled. Thus I continued in my liberty of preaching the Gospel at Bridgnorth about a year and three-quarters, where I took my liberty (though with very little maintenance) to be a very great mercy to me in those troublesome times.

The parliament being sate, did presently fall on that which they accounted reformation of Church and State, and which greatly displeased the king as well as the bishops.

They made many long and vehement speeches against the ship-money, and against the judges that gave their judgment for it, and against the *Et cætera* oath, and the bishops and Convocation that were the formers of it; but especially against the Lord Thomas Wentworth, Lord Deputy of Ireland, and Dr. Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, as the evil counsellors who were said to be the cause of all. . . .

The parliament consisted of two sorts of men, who by the conjunction of these causes were united in their votes and endeavours for a reformation. One party made no great matter of these alterations in the Church; but they said that if parliaments were once down and our propriety¹ gone, and arbitrary government set up, and law subjected to the prince's will, we were then all slaves; and this they made a thing intolerable, for the remedying of which, they said, every true Englishman could think no price too dear. These the people called good Commonwealth's Men. The other sort were the more religious men, who were also sensible of all these things, but were much more sensible of the interest of religion; and these most inveighed against the innovations in the Church, the bowing to altars, the Book for Sports on Sundays, the casting out of ministers, the troubling of the people by the High Commission Court, the pillorying and cutting off men's ears (Mr. Burton's, Mr. Prynne's and Dr. Bastwick's) for speaking against the bishops, the putting down lectures and afternoon sermons and expositions on the Lord's-days, with such other things which they thought of greater weight than ship-money. But because these latter agreed with the former in the vindication of the people's propriety¹ and liberties, the former did the easilier concur with them against the proceedings of the bishops and High Commission Court.

And as soon as their inclination was known to the people, all countries² sent in their complaints and petitions. . . . The Lord Keeper Finch and Secretary Windebank fled beyond sea and saved themselves; the guilty judges were deeply accused, and some of them imprisoned for the cause of ship-money. But the great displeasure was against the Lord Deputy Wentworth and Archbishop Laud. Both these were sent to the Tower, and a charge drawn up against

¹ = property.

² = counties.

them, and managed presently against the Lord Deputy by the ablest lawyers and gentlemen of the house. This held them work a considerable time. The king was exceeding unwilling to consent unto his death, and therefore used all his skill to have drawn off the parliament from so hot a prosecution of him.

And now began the first breach among themselves; for the Lord Falkland, the Lord Digby, and divers other able men were for the sparing of his life. . . . For though the House was unanimous enough in condemning ship-money and the *Et cætera* oath, and the bishops' innovations, etc., yet it was long doubtful which side would have the major vote in the matter of the Earl of Strafford's death, and such other Acts as were most highly displeasing to the king. . .

The parliament also had procured the king to consent to several Acts which were of great importance. . . And the people being confident that all these were signed by the king full sore against his will, and that he abhorred what was done, did think that the parliament which had constrained him to this much could carry it still in what they pleased, and so grew much more regardful of the parliament, and sided with them, not only for their cause and their own interest, but also as supposing them the stronger side (which the vulgar are still¹ apt to follow).

But to return to my own matters. This parliament, among other parts of their reformation, resolved to reform the corrupted clergy, and appointed a committee to receive petitions and complaints against them; which was no sooner understood but multitudes in all countries² came up with petitions against their ministers. The king and parliament were not yet divided, but concurred, and so no partaking in their differences was any part of the accusation of these ministers till long after, when the wars had given the occasion; and then that also came into their articles, but before, it was only matter of insufficiency, false doctrine, illegal innovations or scandal that was brought in against them. . .

Among all these complainers the town of Kidderminster, in Worcestershire, drew up a petition against their ministers. The vicar of the place they articulated against as one that was

¹ = always.

² = counties.

utterly insufficient for the ministry, presented by a Papist, unlearned, preached but once a quarter, which was so weakly as exposed him to laughter, and persuaded them that he understood not the very substantial Articles of Christianity; that he frequented alehouses and had sometimes been drunk; that he turned the table altar-wise, etc., with more such as this. The vicar had a curate under him in the town, whom they also accused; and a curate at a chapel in the parish, a common tippler and a drunkard, a railing quarreller, an ignorant, insufficient man who (as I found by examining him) understood not the common points of the children's Catechism, but said some good words to them sometimes out of Musculus's *Commonplaces* in English, which was almost the only book he had; and his trade in the weekdays was unlawful marriages. The people put their petition into the hands of Sir Henry Herbert, burgess for Bewdley, a town two miles distant. The vicar knowing his insufficiency, and hearing how two others in his case had sped, desired to compound the business with them, and by the mediation of Sir Henry Herbert and others it was brought to this: that he should, instead of his present curate in the town, allow sixty pounds per annum to a preacher whom fourteen of them nominated should choose; and that he should not hinder this preacher from preaching whenever he pleased, and that he himself should read Common Prayer and do all else that was to be done; and so they preferred not their petition against him, nor against his curates, but he kept his place, which was worth to him near two hundred pounds per annum, allowing that sixty pounds out of it to their lecturer. To perform this he gave a bond of five hundred pounds.

These things being thus finished, some of them desired old Mr. Laphorn (a famous man, turned from Nonconformity by King James) to come and preach with them on trial to be their lecturer. Mr. Laphorn's roughness and great immethodicalness and digressions so offended the intelligent leading party that they rejected him somewhat uncivilly, to his great displeasure.

Hereupon they invited me to them from Bridgnorth. The bailiff of the town and all the feoffees desired me to preach with them, in order to a full determination. My mind was much to the place as soon as it was described

to me, because it was a full congregation and most convenient temple; an ignorant, rude and revelling people for the greater part, who had need of preaching, and yet had among them a small company of converts, who were humble, godly, and of good conversations, and not much hated by the rest, and therefore the fitter to assist their teacher; but above all, because they had hardly ever had any lively, serious preaching among them. For Bridgnorth had made me resolve that I would never more go among a people that had been hardened in unprofitableness under an awakening ministry, but either to such as never had any convincing preacher, or to such as had profited by him. As soon as I came to Kidderminster, and had preached there one day, I was chosen *nemine contradicente* (for though fourteen only had the power of choosing, they desired to please the rest). And thus I was brought, by the gracious providence of God, to that place which had the chiefest of my labours and yielded me the greatest fruits of comfort. And I noted the mercy of God in this, that I never went to any place in my life, among all my changes, which I had before desired, designed or thought of (much less sought), but only to those that I never thought of, till the sudden invitation did surprise me. . . .

Whilst I continued at Kidderminster it pleased God to give me much encouragement by the success of my weak but hearty labours. . . .

CHAPTER III

FIRST KIDDERMINSTER MINISTRY

Civil war—Roundheads and Dammes—Nationalists and neutrals—The people's liberties—The real traitors.

1641-1642

ALL this forementioned time of my ministry was passed under my foredescribed weaknesses, which were so great as made me live and preach in some continual expectation of death, supposing still that I had not long to live. And this I found through all my life to be an unvaluable mercy to me, for . . . it made me study and preach things necessary, and a little stirred up my sluggish heart to speak to sinners with some compassion as a dying man to dying men. . .

At one time above all the rest, being under a new and unusual distemper, which put me upon the present expectations of my change, and going for comfort to the promises as I was used, the Tempter strongly assaulted my faith, and would have drawn me towards infidelity itself. . .

And here I found my own miscarriage and the great mercy of God. My miscarriage, in that I had so long neglected the well settling of my foundations, while I had bestowed so much time in the superstructures and the applicatory part. . . The mercy of God, that he let not out these terrible and dangerous temptations upon me while I was weak and in the infancy of my faith, for then I had never been able to withstand them. But faith is like a tree whose top is small while the root is young and shallow; and therefore, as then it hath but small rooting, so is it not liable to the shaking winds and tempests as the big and high-grown trees are; but as the top groweth higher, so the root at once grows greater and deeper fixed, to cause it to endure its greater assaults.

Though formerly I was wont, when any such temptation came, to cast it aside, as fitter to be abhorred than considered of, yet now this would not give me satisfaction; but I was fain to dig to the very foundations, and seriously to examine the reasons of Christianity and to give a hearing to all that could be said against it, that so my faith might

be indeed my own. And at last I found that *Nil tam certum quam quod ex dubio certum*—Nothing is so firmly believed as that which hath been sometime doubted of.

In the storm of this temptation I questioned awhile whether I were indeed a Christian or an infidel. . . And there were divers things that in this assault proved great assistances to my faith.

That the being and attributes of God were so clear to me that he was to my intellect what the sun is to my eye, by which I see itself and all things. And he seemed mad to me that questioned whether there were a God; that any man should dream that the world was made by a conflux of irrational atoms, and reason came from that which had no reason, or that man, or any inferior being, was independent; or that all the being, power, wisdom and goodness which we conversed with had not a cause which in being, power, wisdom and goodness did excel all that which it had caused in the world, and had not all that *formaliter vel eminenter* in itself which it communicated to all the creatures. These and all the suppositions of the atheist have ever since been so visibly foolish and shameful to my apprehension that I scarce find a capacity in myself of doubting of them. . . .

And then I saw that there is no other religion in the world which can stand in competition with Christianity. . . Judaism is but Christianity in the egg or bed. And mere Deism, which is the most plausible competitor, is so turned out of almost all the whole world as if Nature made its own confession that without a mediator it cannot come to God. . .

And I saw that Christ did bring up all his serious and sincere disciples to real holiness and to heavenly-mindedness, and made them new creatures, and set their hearts and designs and hopes upon another life, and brought their sense into subjection to their reason, and taught them to resign themselves to God and to love him above all the world. And it is not like that God will make use of a deceiver for this real visible recovery and reformation of the nature of man; or that anything but his own seal can imprint his image. . .

And I had felt much of the power of his Word and Spirit on myself; doing that which reason now telleth me must be

done. And shall I question my physician when he hath done so much of the cure, and recovered my depraved soul so much to God? . . .

Whilst I was thus employed between outward labours and inward trials, Satan stirred up a little inconsiderable rage of wicked men against me. The town having been formerly eminent for vanity, had yearly a show, in which they brought forth the painted forms of giants and such-like foolery, to walk about the streets with; and though I said nothing against them, as being not simply evil, yet on every one of those days of riot the rabble of the more vicious sort had still some spleen to vent against me as one part of their game. And once all the ignorant rout were raging mad against me for preaching the doctrine of original sin to them, and telling them that infants before regeneration had so much guilt and corruption as made them loathsome in the eyes of God; whereupon they vented it abroad in the country that I preached that God hated or loathed infants, so that they railed at me as I passed through the streets. The next Lord's-day I cleared and confirmed it, and showed them that if this were not true their infants had no need of Christ, of baptism, or of renewing by the Holy Ghost. And I asked them whether they durst say that their children were saved without a Saviour, and were no Christians, and why they baptised them, with much more to that purpose; and afterwards they were ashamed and as mute as fishes.

Once one of the drunken beggars of the town raised a slander of me, that I was under a tree with a woman (an ill-famed beggar of the town). All the drunkards had got it in their mouths before I could find out the original. I got three or four of them bound to the good behaviour, and the sot himself that raised the slander confessed before the court that he saw me in a rainy day on horseback stand under an oak which grew in a thick hedge, and the woman aforesaid standing for shelter on the other side the hedge under the same tree, and that he believed that we saw not one another; but he spake it as a jest, and the company were glad of the occasion to feed their malice. So they all asked me forgiveness, and I desired the magistrate immediately to release them all. . . .

And here I must return to the proceedings of the parlia-

ment, because the rest will not be well understood without connoting the occasions of them which were administered. When the Londoners cried to the House for justice, and honoured those members who were for the punishment of delinquents, and dishonoured those that pleased the king, a breach began to be made among themselves; and the Lord Digby, the Lord Falkland and divers others from that time forward joined with the king. . . . When the king had subscribed, and Strafford was beheaded, he much repented it, even to the last, as his speeches at his death express. And the judgments of the members of the parliament were different about these proceedings. . . .

The things that heightened former displeasures to a miserable war were such as follow, on both parts. On the parliament's part were principally: (1) The people's indiscretion that adhered to them; (2) The imprudence and violence of some members of the House, who went too high; (3) The great diffidence¹ they had of the king when they had provoked him.

On the other side it was hastened: (1) By the calling up of the northern army; (2) By the king's imposing a guard upon the House; (3) By his entering the House to accuse some members; (4) By the miscarriage of the Lord Digby and other of the king's adherents; (5) But above all by the terrible massacre in Ireland, and the threatenings of the rebels to invade England. . . .

The remnant of the old Separatists and Anabaptists in London was then very small and scarce considerable; but they were enough to stir up the younger and unexperienced sort of religious people to speak too vehemently and intemperately against the bishops and the Church and ceremonies, and to jeer and deride at the Common Prayer and all that was against their minds. . . .

These stirred up the apprentices to join with them in petitions, and to go in great numbers to Westminster to present them. And as they went they met with some of the bishops in their coaches going to the House, and (as is usual with the passionate and indiscreet when they are in great companies) they too much forgot civility, and cried out, "No bishops!" which either put them really into a fear or at least so displeased them as gave them occasion to

¹ = distrust.

meet together and draw up a protestation against any law which in their absence should be passed in the parliament, as having themselves a place there, and being, as they said, deterred from coming thither by those clamours and tumults.

This protestation was so ill taken by the parliament as that the subscribers of it were voted delinquents and sent to prison, as going about to destroy the power of parliaments (and among them even Bishop Hall himself). . .

Thus rash attempts of headstrong people do work against the good ends which they themselves intend, and the zeal which hath censorious strife and envy doth tend to confusion and every evil work; and overdoing is the ordinary way of undoing. . . .

And in the House of Commons Sir Henry Vane endeavoured to draw all up to the highest resolutions, and by his parts and converse drew many (so far) to his mind. And also the sense of the younger less experienced sort of the ministers and private Christians in the country was much against amending the bishops and liturgy, and thought this was but to gild over our danger and lose our opportunity; but they were for an utter extirpation. . . .

And the great distrust which the parliament had of the king was another thing which hastened the war, for they were confident that he was unmovable as to his judgment and affections, and that whatever he granted them was but in design to get his advantage utterly to destroy them, and that he did but watch for such an opportunity. . .

And the things on the other side which occasioned their diffidence¹ and caused the war were these following especially above all the rest: the armies of the Scots and English did long continue in the north undisbanded, in their quarters, till the parliament should provide their pay. . . The army of the English, wanting pay, was easily discontented; and the parliament say that the court drew them into a plot against the House, to march suddenly up towards London and to master the parliament. . .

Another was this: when the parliament had set a guard upon their own House (which they took to be their privilege) the king discharged them and set another guard upon them of his choosing, which made them seem as much afraid as if he had made them prisoners. . .

¹ = distrust.

Another great cause of the diffidence and war was this: the king . . . goeth to the House of Commons with a company of Cavaliers with swords and pistols, to have charged five of the members of that House, and one of the Lords' House, with high treason, viz., Mr. Pym, Mr. Hampden, Mr. Hollis, Mr. Strowd and Sir Arthur Haselrigge, and the Lord Kimbolton (after Earl of Manchester and Lord Chamberlain) of the Lords. But the king was not so secret or speedy in this action but the members had notice of it before his coming, and absented themselves (being together at an inner house in Red Lion Court in Watling Street, near Bread Street in London); and so the king and his company laid hands on none, but went their ways. Had the five members been there, the rest supposed they would have taken them away by violence.

When the king was gone, this alarm did cast the House into such apprehensions as if, one after another, their liberties or lives must be assaulted by the sword if they pleased not the court, so that they presently voted it a breach of their privileges and an effect of the king's evil counsellors, and published their votes to awaken the people to rescue them, as if they were in apparent danger.

The king, being disappointed, publisheth a paper in which he chargeth the members with treason, as stirring up the apprentices to tumultuous petitioning, etc., but confesseth his error in violating their privileges.

And another thing which hastened the war was that the Lord Digby and some other Cavaliers attempted, at Kingston-upon-Thames, to have suddenly got together a body of horse, which the parliament took as the beginning of a war, or an insurrection and rebellion. But the party was dissipated before they could grow to any great strength, and the parliament voted him a delinquent, and sent to apprehend him and bring him to justice, with his partakers; but he fled into France, and when he was there the parliament intercepted some of his letters to the king, advising him to get away from London to some place of strength, where his friends might come to him, which they took as an advice to him to begin a war. Thus one thing after another blew the coals.

But of all the rest there was nothing that with the people wrought so much as the Irish massacre and rebel-

lion. The Irish Papists did, by an unexpected insurrection, rise all over Ireland at once, and seized upon almost all the strengths of the whole land, and Dublin wonderfully escaped (a servant of Sir John Clotworthy's discovering the plot), which was to have been surprised with the rest, Octob. 23, 1641. Two hundred thousand persons they murdered (as you may see in the Earl of Orrery's *Answer to a Petition*, and in Dr. Jones's *Narrative of the Examinations*, and Sir John Temple's *History*, who was one of the resident justices). Men, women and children were most cruelly used, the women ripped up and filthily used when they killed them, and the infants used like toads or vermin. Thousands of those that escaped came stripped and almost famished to Dublin, and afterwards into England to beg their bread. Multitudes of them were driven together into rivers, and cast over bridges and drowned. Many witnesses swore before the lords justices that at Portdown Bridge a vision every day appeared to the passengers of naked persons standing up in the middle in the river and crying out, "Revenge! Revenge!" In a word, scarce any history mentioneth the like barbarous cruelty as this was. The French massacre murdered but thirty or forty thousand; but *two hundred thousand* was a number which astonished those that heard it.

This filled all England with a fear both of the Irish and of the Papists at home, for they supposed that the priests and the interest of their religion were the cause; insomuch that when the rumour of a plot was occasioned at London, the poor people, all the countries¹ over, were ready either to run to arms or hide themselves, thinking that the Papists were ready to rise and cut their throats. And when they saw the English Papists join with the king against the parliament, it was the greatest thing that ever alienated them from the king.

Hereupon the parliament was solicitous to send help to Dublin, lest that also should be lost. The king was so forward to that service that he pressed the parliament that he might go over himself. The parliament liked that worst of all, as if they had been confident that ill counsellors advised him to it that he might get at the head of two armies and unite them both against the parliament, and

¹ = counties.

by his absence make a breach and hinder the proceedings of the Houses. . . .

Things being thus ripened for a war in England, the king forsaketh London and goeth into the north; in Yorkshire he calleth the militia of the country¹ which would join with him, and goeth to Hull and demandeth entrance; Sir John Hotham is put in trust with it by the parliament, and denieth him entrance with his forces.

The parliament nameth lord-lieutenants for the militia of several counties, and the king nameth other lord-lieutenants by a commission of array, and each of them command the said lord-lieutenants to settle the militia.

The parliament publisheth their votes to the people, that the king, misled by evil counsel, was raising a war against his parliament. The Lord Willoughby of Parham in Lincolnshire, the Lord Brook in Warwickshire, and others in other counties, call in the country to appear in arms for the parliament. The king's lords call them in to appear for the king; both king and parliament published their declarations justifying their cause.

The parliament chooseth the Earl of Essex for their general, and resolveth the raising of an army. . .

The king . goeth to Nottingham, and there setteth up his standard to summon his subjects to his aid.

The Lord Brook and the Earl of Northampton had some scuffling in Warwickshire. . .

At Nottingham there were but about two thousand came in to the king's standard, whereas the Londoners quickly filled up a gallant army for the Earl of Essex; and the citizens abundantly brought in their money and plate (yea, the women their rings) to Guildhall to pay the army.

Hereupon the king sent to the parliament from Nottingham the offer of a treaty, with some general proposals, which in my opinion was the likeliest opportunity that ever the parliament had for a full and safe agreement; and the king seemed very serious in it, and the lowness of his condition upon so much trial of his people was very like to have wrought much with him. But the parliament was persuaded that he did it but to get time to fill up his army and to hinder their proceedings, and therefore accepted not of his offer for a treaty, but instead of it sent him nineteen

¹ = county.

proposals of their own, viz., that if he would disband his army, come to his parliament, give up delinquents to a legal course of justice, etc., he should find them dutiful, etc. . . .

It is of very great moment here to understand the quality of the persons which adhered to the king and to the parliament, with their reasons.

A great part of the Lords forsook the parliament, and so did many of the House of Commons, and came to the king; but that was, for the most of them, after Edgehill fight, when the king was at Oxford. A very great part of the knights and gentlemen of England in the several counties (who were not parliament-men) adhered to the king. . . . And most of the tenants of these gentlemen, and also most of the poorest of the people, whom the other call the rabble, did follow the gentry and were for the king.

On the parliament's side were (besides themselves) the smaller part (as some thought) of the gentry in most of the counties, and the greatest part of the tradesmen and freeholders and the middle sort of men, especially in those corporations and countries¹ which depend on clothing and such manufactures. . . .

But though it must be confessed that the public safety and liberty wrought very much with most, especially with the nobility and gentry who adhered to the parliament, yet was it principally the differences about religious matter that filled up the parliament's armies and put the resolution and valour into their soldiers, which carried them on in another manner than mercenary soldiers are carried on. Not that the matter of bishops or no bishops was the main thing (for thousands that wished for good bishops were on the parliament's side), though many called it *bellum episcopale* (and with the Scots that was a greater part of the controversy). But the generality of the people through the land (I say not *all*, or *every one*) who were then called Puritans, precisians, religious persons, that used to talk of God, and heaven, and Scripture, and holiness . . . I say, the main body of this sort of men, both preachers and people, adhered to the parliament. And on the other side, the gentry that were not so precise and strict against an oath, or gaming, or plays, or drinking, nor troubled themselves so much about the matters of God and the world to

¹ = counties.

come, and the ministers and people that were for the King's Book, for dancing and recreations on the Lord's-days, and those that made not so great a matter of every sin, but went to church and heard Common Prayer, and were glad to hear a sermon which lashed the Puritans. . .

If you ask how this came to pass, it requireth a longer answer than I think fit here to give; but, briefly, actions spring from natural dispositions and interest. There is somewhat in the nature of all worldly men which maketh them earnestly desirous of riches and honours in the world. . . Yet conscience must be quieted and reputation preserved, which can neither of them be done without some religion. Therefore such a religion is necessary to such as is consistent with a worldly mind, which outside-formality, lip-service and hypocrisy is, but seriousness, sincerity and spirituality is not.

On the other side, there is that in the new nature of a spiritual believer which inclineth him to things above, and causeth him to look at worldly grandeur and riches as things more dangerous than desirable; and he is dead to the world, and the world to him, by the Cross of Christ. . . And the laws of Christ, to which they are so devoted, are of such a stream as cannot suit with carnal interest. . . .

And thus the interest of the diocesans and of the profane and ignorant sort of people were unhappily twisted together in England. . . .

And abundance of the ignorant sort of the country, who were civil, did flock in to the parliament, and filled up their armies afterward, merely because they heard men *swear* for the Common Prayer and bishops, and heard others *pray* that were against them; and because they heard the king's soldiers with horrid oaths abuse the name of God, and saw them live in debauchery, and the parliament's soldiers flock to sermons and talking of religion, and praying and singing Psalms together on their guards. And all the sober men that I was acquainted with, who were against the parliament, were wont to say, "The king hath the better cause, but the parliament hath the better men." . . .

When the war was beginning the parties set names of contempt upon each other, and also took such titles to themselves and their own cause as might be the fittest

means for that which they designed. The old names of Puritans and Formalists were not now broad enough nor of sufficient force. The king's party, as their serious word, called the parliament's party rebels, and as their common ludicrous name, the Roundheads (the original of which is not certainly known: some say it was because the Puritans then commonly wore short hair, and the king's party long hair; some say it was because the queen, at Strafford's trial, asked who that *round-headed* man was, meaning Mr. Pym, because he spoke so strongly).

The parliament's party called the other side commonly by the name of Malignants, as supposing that the generality of the enemies of serious godliness went that way in a desire to destroy the religious out of the land. (And the parliament put that name into their mouths) and the soldiers they called Cavaliers, because they took that name to themselves; and afterwards they called them Dammes, because "God damn me" was become a common curse, and as a byword among them.

The king professed to fight for the subjects' liberties, the laws of the land, and the Protestant religion. The parliament professed the same, and all their commissions were granted as "for king and parliament," for the parliament professed that the separation of the king from the parliament could not be without a destruction of the government, and that the dividers were the destroyers and enemies to the State, and if the soldiers asked each other at any surprise or meeting, "Who are you for?" those on the king's side said, "For the king," and the others said, "For king and parliament." . . .

For my own part I freely confess that I was not judicious enough in politics and law to decide this controversy which so many lawyers and wise men differed in. And I freely confess that, being astonished at the Irish massacre, and persuaded fully both of the parliament's good endeavours for reformation and of their real danger, my judgment of the main cause much swayed my judgment in the matter of the wars. . . And the consideration of the quality of the parties that sided for each cause in the countries did greatly work with me, and more than it should have done. . .

I make no doubt but both parties were to blame (as it commonly falleth out in most wars and contentions), and

I will not be he that shall justify either of them. I doubt not but the headiness and rashness of the younger unexperienced sort of religious people made many parliament men and ministers overgo themselves to keep pace with those hotspurs. . . And as the sectaries increased so did this insolence increase. I have myself been in London when they have on Lord's-days stood at the church doors while the Common Prayer was reading, saying, "We must stay till he is out of his pottage." . .

But I then thought that, whosoever was faulty, the people's liberties and safety could not be forfeited. And I thought that all the subjects were not guilty of all the faults of king or parliament when they defended them; yea, that if both their causes had been bad as against each other, yet that the subjects should adhere to that party which most secured the welfare of the nation, and might defend the land under their conduct, without owning all their cause. . I was then so zealous that I thought it a great sin for men that were able to defend their country to be neuters; and I have been tempted since to think that I was a more competent judge upon the place when all things were before our eyes than I am in the review of those days and actions so many years after, when distance disadvantage the apprehension. . . But I confess for my part I have not such censorious thoughts of those that then were neuters as formerly I have had: for he that either thinketh both sides raised an unlawful war, or that could not tell which (if either) was in the right, might well be excused if he defended neither.

I was always satisfied that the dividers of the king and parliament were the traitors, whoever they were; and that the division tended to the dissolution of the government. . .

But matters that wars and blood are any way concerned in are so great and tenderly to be handled that I profess to the world that I dare not, I will not justify anything that others or I myself have done of any such consequence. But though I never hurt the person of any man, yet I resolve to pray daily and earnestly to God that he will reveal to me whatever I have done amiss, and not suffer me through ignorance to be impenitent, and would forgive me both my known and unknown sins, and cleanse this land from the guilt of blood. . .

CHAPTER IV

SEPARATION

*The fury of the rabble—Gloucester—Worcester—Edgehill—
Coventry—Naseby—"A Cromwell ! A Cromwell !"*

1642-1645

WHEN I was at Kidderminster the parliament made an order for all the people to take a protestation to defend the king's person, honour and authority, the power and privileges of parliaments, the liberties of the subject and the Protestant religion, against the common enemy, meaning the Papists; the Irish massacre and threatenings occasioning this protestation. I obeyed them in joining with the magistrate in offering the people this protestation, which caused some to be offended with me.

About that time the parliament sent down an order for the demolishing of all statues and images of any of the three Persons in the Blessed Trinity, or of the Virgin Mary, which should be found in churches, or on the crosses in churchyards. My judgment was for the obeying of this order, thinking it came from just authority; but I meddled not in it, but left the churchwarden to do what he thought good. The churchwarden (an honest, sober, quiet man), seeing a crucifix upon the cross in the churchyard, set up a ladder to have reached it, but it proved too short; whilst he was gone to seek another, a crew of the drunken riotous party of the town (poor journeymen and servants) took the alarm, and run altogether with weapons to defend the crucifix and the church images (of which there were divers left since the time of Popery). The report was among them that I was the actor, and it was me they sought; but I was walking almost a mile out of the town, or else I suppose I had there ended my days; when they missed me and the churchwarden both, they went raving about the streets to seek us. Two neighbours that dwelt in other parishes, hearing that they sought my life, ran in among

them to see whether I were there, and they knocked them both down in the streets, and both of them are since dead and I think never perfectly recovered that hurt. When they had foamed about half an hour, and met with none of us, and were newly housed, I came in from my walk, and hearing the people cursing at me in their doors, I wondered what the matter was, but quickly found how fairly I had scaped. The next Lord's-day I dealt plainly with them, and laid open to them the quality of that action, and told them, seeing they so requited me as to seek my blood, I was willing to leave them, and save them from that guilt. But the poor sots were so amazed and ashamed, that they took on sorrily and were loth to part with me.

About this time the king's declarations were read in our market-place, and the reader (a violent country gentleman), seeing me pass the streets, stopped and said, "There goeth a traitor," without ever giving a syllable of reason for it.

And the commission of array was set afoot (for the parliament meddled not with the militia of that county, the Lord Howard, their lieutenant, not appearing). Then the rage of the rioters grew greater than before. And in preparation to the war they had got the word among them, "Down with the Roundheads"; insomuch that if a stranger passed, in many places, that had short hair and a civil habit, the rabble presently cried, "Down with the Roundheads"; and some they knocked down in the open streets.

In this fury of the rabble I was advised to withdraw a while from home; whereupon I went to Gloucester. As I passed but through a corner of the suburbs of Worcester, they that knew me not, cried, "Down with the Roundheads," and I was glad to spur on and be gone. But when I came to Gloucester, among strangers also that had never known me, I found a civil, courteous and religious people, as different from Worcester as if they had lived under another government. There I stayed a month, and whilst I was there many pamphlets came out on both sides preparing for a war. . . .

When I had been at Gloucester a month my neighbours of Kidderminster came for me home, and told me that if I stayed any longer the people would interpret it either

that I was afraid upon some guilt or that I was against the king. So I bid my host (Mr. Darney, the Town Clerk) and my friends farewell, and never came to Gloucester more.

When I came home I found the beggarly drunken rout in a very tumultuating disposition, and the superiors that were for the king did animate them. . . And when the wars began, almost all these drunkards went into the king's army, and were quickly killed, so that scarce a man of them came home again and survived the war.

All this time the king, having marched from Nottingham to Shrewsbury, had there very successfully made up his army, especially out of Shropshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Wales, though many came also out of other parts. And the Earl of Essex's army was filled up, and was marching down towards Worcester.

The fury of the rabble was so hot at home that I was fain to withdraw again, and being with one Mr. Hunt near Inkberrow, there came a party of the Earl of Essex's army before the rest to block up the Lord Byron in Worcester till the Earl of Essex came to take him there. This party lay in a meadow near Powick, above a mile from Worcester, Mr. Hunt, with other countrymen, bringing them in provision. I had a great mind to go see them, having never seen any part of an army. As soon as I came, a messenger came out of Worcester secretly to tell them that the Lord Byron was mounted and ready to be gone. Hereupon the commanders (Colonel Brown, a Scot, Colonel Edwin Sands of Kent, and Colonel Nath. Fienes, Captain Joh. Fienes and Captain Wingate) consulted what was to be done. Brown and Sands were hot for the leaving of their ground (where they were secure by a river) and presently to pursue the enemy. The rest said, "This message may be a deceit to draw us into a snare; let us first send scouts and see how it is." But the other prevailed, and over the bridge they went (being all horse and dragoons); and by that time they had passed a narrow lane, and half of them entered a field beyond it. They found the king's horse, under the command of Prince Rupert, drawn up ready to charge them (when they knew not whom they fought with, nor knew that Prince Rupert was within twenty miles of them); so he charged them before the rest came in, and Colonel Sands was wounded

and taken prisoner, and died of his wounds; and Major Douglas slain and the rest fled. And though the enemy pursued them no farther than the bridge, yet fled they in grievous terror to Pershore, and the Earl of Essex's life-guard lying there took the alarm that the enemy was following them, and away they went. This sight quickly told me the vanity of armies, and how little confidence is to be placed in them.

Upon this Prince Rupert fetched off the Lord Byron and marched away; and the next day the Earl of Essex came to Worcester with many lords and knights and a flourishing army, gallantly clothed but never tried in fight. . .

The king's army was upon the march from Shrewsbury towards Oxford. Their way lying through Wolverhampton, some of their scouts appeared on the top of Kinver Edge, three miles from Kidderminster. The brigades in Kidderminster, not knowing but all the king's army might come that way, marched off to Worcester, and in haste left a carriage or two with arms behind. Some of the inhabitants hasted to the king's soldiers and told them all, which made them come into the town and take those arms.

The fury of our own rabble and of the king's soldiers was such that I saw no safety in staying at home. The civility of the Earl of Essex's army was such that among them there was no danger (though none of them knew me). And there was such excellent preaching among them at Worcester that I stayed there among them a few days, till the marching of the king's army occasioned their remove.

Upon the Lord's-day following I preached at Alcester for my reverend friend Mr. Samuel Clark. As I was preaching the people heard the cannon play, and perceived that the armies were engaged; when sermon was done (in the afternoon) the report was more audible, which made us all long to hear of the success. About sun-setting (Octob. 23, 1642) many troops fled through the town, and told us that all was lost on the parliament side, and the carriage taken and waggons plundered before they came away; and none that followed brought any other news. The townsmen sent a messenger to Stratford-upon-Avon to know the certain truth. About four o'clock in the

morning the messenger returned and told us that Prince Rupert wholly routed the left wing of the Earl of Essex's army; but while his men were plundering the waggons the main body and the right wing routed the rest of the king's army, took his standard (but it was lost again), killed his general, the Earl of Lindsey, and his standard-bearer, took prisoner the Earl of Lindsey's son, the Lord Willoughby, and others, and lost few persons of quality and noblemen but the Lord St. John, eldest son to the Earl of Bullingbrook¹; and that the loss of the left wing was through the treachery of Sir Faithful Fortescue, major to the Lord Fielding's regiment of horse, who turned to the king when he should have charged; and that the victory was obtained principally by Colonel Hollis's regiment of London red-coats and the Earl of Essex's own regiment and life-guard, where Sir Philip Stapleton and Sir Arthur Haselrigge and Colonel Urrey did much.

The next morning, being willing to see the field where they had fought, I went to Edgehill, and found the Earl of Essex with the remaining part of his army keeping the ground, and the king's army facing them upon the hill a mile off, and about a thousand dead bodies in the field between them (and I suppose many were buried before); and neither of the armies moving toward each other. The king's army presently drew off towards Banbury, and so to Oxford. The Earl of Essex's army went back to provide for the wounded and refresh themselves at Warwick Castle (the Lord Brook's house).

For myself I knew not what course to take. To live at home I was uneasy; but especially now, when soldiers on one side or other would be frequently among us, and we must be still at the mercy of every furious beast that would make a prey of us. I had neither money nor friends; I knew not who would receive me in any place of safety; nor had I anything to satisfy them for my diet and entertainment. Hereupon I was persuaded by one that was with me to go to Coventry, where one of my old acquaintance was minister (Mr. Simon King, sometime schoolmaster at Bridgnorth). So thither I went with a purpose to stay there till one side or other had got the victory and the war was ended, and then to return home again. For so wise in

¹ = Bolingbroke.

matters of war was I, and all the country besides, that we commonly supposed that a very few days or weeks by *one other* battle would end the wars; and I believe that no small number of the parliament men had no more wit than to think so too. There I stayed at Mr. King's a month, but the war was as far from being like to end as before. . . .

Here I lived in the Governor's house, and followed my studies as quietly as in a time of peace for about a year, only preaching once a week to the soldiers, and once on the Lord's-day to the people, not taking of any of them a penny for either, save my diet only. . . .

When I had been above a year at Coventry the war was so far from being ended that it had dispersed itself into almost all the land . . . and I think there were few parishes where at one time or other blood had not been shed. . . .

In Shropshire, where my father dwelt, both he and all his neighbours that were noted for praying and hearing sermons were plundered by the king's soldiers, so that some of them had almost nothing but lumber left in their houses; though my father was so far from meddling on either side that he knew not what they were doing, but followed his own business; nor had he seen me, or heard of me, for a long time.

At this time Colonel Mitton and other Shropshire gentlemen resolved to settle a garrison at Wem, a little town in their own country, eight miles from Shrewsbury, and Mr. Mackworth, Mr. Hunt, etc., were earnest with me to go with them because it was my native country. I was desirous to be near my father if I could any way relieve him, and to be absent a while from Coventry (there being some difference between the Earl of Denbigh and the committee, which went high). So I consented to go with them only for a few weeks and to return. Their design was to get some of my neighbours thither, who they knew would follow me; and about thirty or forty of them joined in Colonel Mackworth's troop and went.

As soon as we came thither and they began to fortify Wem, the Lord Capel brought his army from Shrewsbury against them, where (Sir William Brereton bringing the Cheshire trained bands to assist the little handful at Wem) the two armies lay within a mile of each other two or three days, and after some little skirmishing the Lord Capel

drew off, and marched into Cheshire to Nantwich, being assured thereby to draw off the Cheshire men, and then resolved the same night to return and storm the town; and his plot took according to his contrivance, for that night he plundered all the villages about Nantwich, and at midnight marched back another way. The Cheshire men were quickly on their march when they heard that the enemy was plundering their country; and by the time they came to Nantwich the Lord Capel was got back again to Wem. There was nothing about the town but a ditch little bigger than such as husbandmen enclose their grounds with, and this not finished; and the gates, new made, had no hinges, but were reared up, and there were but very few men in the town, especially under the command of Colonel Hunt (a plain-hearted, honest, godly man, entirely beloved and trusted by the soldiers for his honesty). I went with the Cheshire men to Nantwich. When they came thither they understood the stratagem of the Lord Capel, and heard that they were storming Wem. And Sir William Brereton would have had his men march after them presently to relieve Wem; but the soldiers were all commanders, and seeing their own country plundered in their absence, and being weary, they all resolved that they would not go; and so Wem was given up as lost; but in the morning, about three or four o'clock, when we thought they had been asleep, their minds all changed, and to Wem they would then go. But they marched so slowly, and halted by the way, that the Lord Capel's army had twice stormed Wem and, being beaten back, drew off just as the Cheshire men came upon them, and secured their retreat by Lee Bridge and the darkness of the night, and the ignorance of their fears and disorders in the army that pursued them. When we came to Wem we found that the Lord Capel had been twice repulsed with much loss, Colonel Win slain, and Colonel Tho. Scriven mortally wounded, and little hurt done to any in the town.

When I had stayed here and at Longford garrison about two months or more, and had redeemed my father out of prison at Lilleshall, I returned to Coventry. . . I settled in my old habitation and employment, and followed my studies there in quietness for another year. But whereas

whilst I rode up and down my body had more health than of a long time before, when I settled to my studies in a sedentary life (and grieved for the calamitous condition of the land) I fell weaker than ever I was before, and, going to London, was long under the cure of Sir Theodore Meyern, and somewhat recovered, returned again. . . .

While I lived here in peace and liberty, as men in a dry house do hear the storms abroad so did we daily hear the news of one fight or other, or one garrison or other won or lost: the two Newbury fights, Gloucester siege, the marvellous sieges of Plymouth, Lyme and Taunton, Sir William Waller's successes and losses, the loss at Newark, the slaughter at Bolton, the greatest fight of all at York, with abundance more. So that hearing such sad news on one side or other was our daily work, insomuch that as duly as I awakened in the morning I expected to hear one come and tell me such a garrison is won or lost, or such a defeat received or given. And "Do you hear the news" was commonly the first word I heard. So miserable were those bloody days in which he was the most honourable that could kill most of his enemies. . . .

When by the great mercy of God I had lived two years in quietness at Coventry, the Earl of Essex, being weakened by a great loss in Cornwall, fell under the great displeasure of some of the parliament, not as to his person, but as to the conduct of affairs, who prevailed to have him laid by. . .

But the chief cause was that Sir H. Vane by this time had increased sectaries in the House, having drawn some members to his opinion; and Cromwell, who was the Earl of Manchester's lieutenant-general, had gathered to him as many of the religious party, especially of the sectaries, as he could get, and kept a correspondence with Vane's party in the House, as if it were only to strengthen the religious party. And Manchester's army, especially Cromwell's party, had won a victory near Horncastle in Lincolnshire, and had done the main service of the day at the great fight at York; and everywhere the religious party, that were deepliest apprehensive of the concernment of the war, had far better success than the other sort of common soldiers.

These things set together caused almost all the religious sort of men in parliament, armies, garrisons and country

to be for the new-modelling of the army, and putting out the looser sort of men (especially officers) and putting religious men in their steads. But in all this work the Vanists in the House, and Cromwell in the army, joined together, outwitted and over-reached the rest, and carried on the interest of the sectaries in special, while they drew the religious party along as for the interest of godliness in the general. . . .

And these things made the new modelling of the army to be resolved on. But all the question was how to effect it without stirring up the forces against them which they intended to disband. And all this was notably despatched at once by one vote, which was called the Self-denying Vote, viz., that because commands in the army had much pay, and parliament men should keep to the service of the House, therefore no parliament men should be members of the army. This pleased the soldiers, who looked to have the more pay to themselves; and at once it put out the two generals, the Earl of Essex and the Earl of Manchester, and also Sir William Waller, a godly, valiant major-general of another army; and also many colonels in the army and in other parts of the land, and the governor of Coventry, and of many other garrisons; and to avoid all suspicion Cromwell was put out himself.

When this was done the next question was who should be lord-general, and what new officers should be put in or old ones continued. And here the policy of Vane and Cromwell did its best. For general they chose Sir Thomas Fairfax. . . . This man was chosen because they supposed to find him a man of no quickness of parts, of no elocution, of no suspicious plotting wit, and therefore one that Cromwell could make use of at his pleasure. And he was acceptable to sober men, because he was religious, faithful, valiant and of a grave, sober, resolved disposition, very fit for execution and neither too great nor too cunning to be commanded by the parliament.

And when *he* was chosen for general, Cromwell's men must not be without *him*; so valiant a man must not be laid by. The Self-denying Vote must be thus far only dispensed with. Cromwell only, and no other member of either House, must be excepted, and so he is made lieutenant-general of the army. . . .

The English army, being thus new-modelled, was really in the hand of Oliver Cromwell, though seemingly under the command of Sir Thomas Fairfax (who was shortly after Lord Fairfax, his father dying). . .

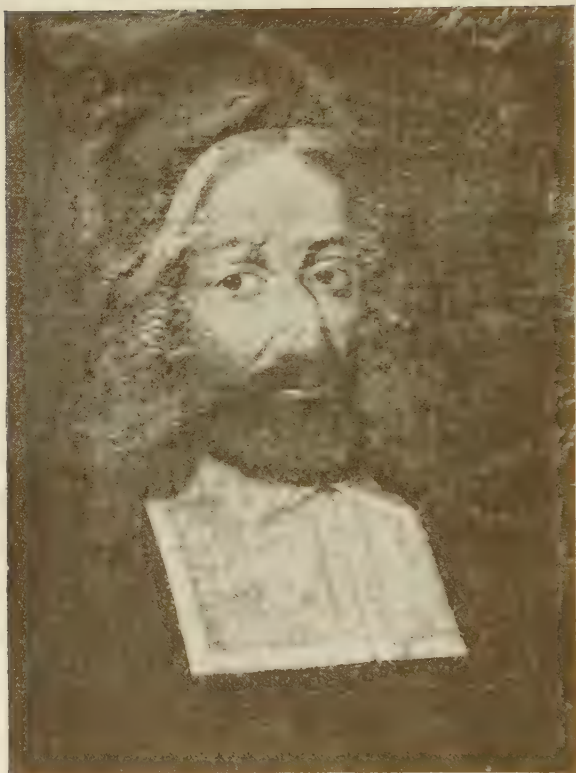
But now begins the change of the old cause. A shrewd book came out not long before, called *Plain English*, preparatory hereto. And when the Lord Fairfax should have marched with his army, he would not (as common fame saith) take his commission, because it ran as all others before, "For defence of the king's person"; for it was intimated that this was but hypocrisy, to profess to defend the king when they marched to fight against him, and that bullets could not distinguish between his person and another man's; and therefore this clause must be left out, that they might be no hypocrites. And so had a commission without that clause, "For the king." And this was the day that changed the cause.

The army, being ready to march, was partly the envy and partly the scorn of the nobility and the lord-lieutenants and the officers which had been put out by the Self-denying Vote; but their actions quickly vindicated them from contempt. They first attempted no less than the siege of Oxford; but in the meantime the king takes the field with a very numerous well-recruited army, and marcheth into Northamptonshire into the parliament's quarters, and thence straight to Leicester, a town poorly fortified, but so advantageously situated for his use as would have been an exceeding loss to the parliament if he could have kept it. It was taken by storm and many slain in it.

General Fairfax leaveth Oxford and marcheth through Northamptonshire towards the king. The king having the greater number, and the parliament's army being of a new contemned model, he marcheth back to meet them, and in a field near Naseby, a village in Northamptonshire, they met. Cromwell had hasted a few days before into the associated counties (which were their treasury for men and money) and brought with him about five or six hundred men, and came into the army just as they were drawn up and going on to give battle. His sudden and seasonable coming, with the great name he had got by the applauses of his own soldiers, made a sudden joy in the army (thinking he had brought them more help than he did), so that all

cried "A Cromwell! A Cromwell!" and so went on; and after a short hot fight the king's army was totally routed and put to flight, and about five thousand prisoners taken, with all his ordnance and carriage and abundance of his own letters to the queen and others in his cabinet (which the parliament printed, as thinking such things were there contained as greatly disadvantaged the reputation of his word and cause). Major-General Skippon, fighting valiantly, was here dangerously wounded, but afterwards recovered. The king's army was utterly lost by the taking of Leicester; for by this means it was gone so far from his own garrisons that his flying horse could have no place of retreat, but were utterly scattered and brought to nothing. The king himself fled to Lichfield (and it is reported that he would have gone to Shrewsbury, his council having never suffered him to know that it was taken till now); and so he went to Raglan Castle in Monmouthshire, which was a stronghold and the house of the Marquess of Worcester, a Papist (where his dispute with the marquess was said to be, which Dr. Baily published and then turned Papist; and which Mr. Christopher Cartwright continued, defending the king). Fairfax's army pursued to Leicester, where the wounded men and some others stayed with the garrison; in a day or two's time the town was retaken.

And now I am come up to the passage which I intended of my own going into the army.



MUCH-DAMAGED BUT PROBABLY GENUINE PORTRAIT (BEARDED)
PAINTED ON CANVAS, IN VESTRY OF BAXTER'S PARISH CHURCH
OF ST. MARY'S AND ALL SAINTS', KIDDERMINSTER

CHAPTER V

WITH THE ARMY

*A new face of things—Cold welcome from Cromwell—
Sectaries—Surrender of Bristol—A health to the devil !—
Pew versus gallery—Serious illness—Rous Lench Court.*

1645-1647

NASEBY being not far from Coventry, where I was, and the noise of the victory being loud in our ears, and I having two or three that of old had been my intimate friends in Cromwell's army whom I had not seen of above two years, I was desirous to go see whether they were dead or alive; and so to Naseby field I went two days after the fight, and thence by the army's quarters before Leicester to seek my acquaintance. When I found them I stayed with them a night, and I understood the state of the army much better than ever I had done before. We that lived quietly in Coventry did keep to our old principles, and thought all others had done so too, except a very few inconsiderable persons. . . We took the true happiness of king and people, Church and State, to be our end, and so we understood the Covenant, engaging both against Papists and schismatics. And when the court news-book told the world of the swarms of Anabaptists in our armies, we thought it had been a mere lie, because it was not so with us nor in any of the garrison or county forces about us. But when I came to the army among Cromwell's soldiers I found a new face of things which I never dreamt of. I heard the plotting heads very hot upon that which intimated their intention to subvert both Church and State. . .

Abundance of common troopers and many of the officers I found to be honest, sober, orthodox men, and others tractable, ready to hear the truth and of upright intentions. But a few proud, self-conceited, hot-headed sectaries had got into the highest places and were Cromwell's chief favourites, and by their very heat and activity bore down the rest or carried them along with them, and were the soul of the army, though much fewer in number than the

rest (being indeed not one to twenty throughout the army; their strength being in the general's and Whalley's and Rich's regiments of horse, and in the new-placed officers in many of the rest).

I perceived that they took the king for a tyrant and an enemy, and really intended absolutely to master him or to ruin him; and that they thought if they might fight against him they might kill or conquer him. . . .

Upon this I began to blame both other ministers and myself. I saw that it was the ministers that had lost all by forsaking the army and betaking themselves to an easier and quieter way of life. . . .

And I reprehended myself also, who had before rejected an invitation from Cromwell. When he lay at Cambridge long before, with that famous troop which he began his army with, his officers purposed to make their troop a gathered church, and they all subscribed an invitation to me to be their pastor and sent it me to Coventry. I sent them a denial reproving their attempt, and told them wherein my judgment was against the lawfulness and convenience of their way, and so I heard no more from them. And afterward, meeting Cromwell at Leicester, he expostulated with me for denying them. These very men that then invited me to be their pastor were the men that afterwards headed much of the army, and some of them were the forwardest in all our changes; which made me wish that I had gone among them, however it had been interpreted; for then all the fire was in one spark.

When I had informed myself, to my sorrow, of the state of the army, Captain Evanson (one of my orthodox informers) desired me yet to come to their regiment, telling me that it was the most religious, most valiant, most successful of all the army, but in as much danger as any one whatsoever. I was loth to leave my studies and friends and quietness at Coventry to go into an army so contrary to my judgment; but I thought the public good commanded me, and so I gave him some encouragement; whereupon he told his Colonel (Whalley), who also was orthodox in religion, but engaged by kindred and interest to Cromwell. He invited me to be chaplain to his regiment, and I told him I would take but a day's time to deliberate and would send him an answer or else come to him.

As soon as I came home to Coventry I called together an assembly of ministers. . I told them the sad news of the corruption of the army, and that I thought all we had valued was like to be endangered by them. . . .

The ministers finding my own judgment for it, and being moved with the cause, did unanimously give their judgment for my going. Hereupon I went straight to the committee and told them that I had an invitation to the army, and desired their consent to go. They consulted awhile, and then left it wholly to the governor, saying that if he consented they should not hinder me. It fell out that Colonel Barker, the governor, was just then to be turned out, as a member of parliament, by the Self-denying Vote. And one of his captains was to be colonel and governor in his place (Colonel Willoughby). Hereupon Colonel Barker was content in his discontent that I should go out with him, that he might be missed the more, and so gave me his consent.

Hereupon I sent word to Colonel Whalley that tomorrow, God willing, I would come to him. As soon as this was done the elected governor was much displeased, and the soldiers were so much offended with the committee for consenting to my going, that the committee all met again in the night and sent for me and told me I must not go. I told them that by their consent I had promised and therefore must go. They told me that the soldiers were ready to mutiny against them, and they could not satisfy them, and therefore I must stay. . . In a word, they were so angry with me that I was fain to tell them all the truth of my motives and design, what a case I perceived the army to be in, and that I was resolved to do my best against it. I knew not till afterward that Colonel William Purefoy, a parliament man, one of the chief of them, was a confidant of Cromwell's; and as soon as I had spoken what I did of the army, magisterially he answereth me, "Let me hear no more of that. If Nol Cromwell should hear any soldier speak but such a word, he would cleave his crown. You do them wrong; it is not so." . . And so I parted with those that had been my very great friends in some displeasure. But the soldiers threatened to stop the gates and keep me in; but being honest understanding men, I quickly satisfied the leaders of them by a private

intimation of my reasons and resolutions, and some of them accompanied me on my way.

As soon as I came to the army Oliver Cromwell coldly bid me welcome, and never spake one word to me more while I was there; nor once all that time vouchsafed me an opportunity to come to the headquarters where the councils and meetings of the officers were, so that most of my design was thereby frustrated. And his secretary gave out that there was a reformer come to the army to undeceive them, and to save Church and State, with some such other jeers; by which I perceived that all that I had said but the night before to the committee was come to Cromwell before me (I believe by Colonel Purefoy's means). But Colonel Whalley welcomed me, and was the worse thought on for it by the rest of the cabal.

Here I set myself from day to day to find out the corruptions of the soldiers, and to discourse and dispute them out of their mistakes, both religious and political. My life among them was a daily contending against seducers and gently arguing with the more tractable, and another kind of militia I had than theirs. . . .

Because I perceived that it was a few men that bore the bell that did all the hurt among them, I acquainted myself with those men, and would be oft disputing with them in the hearing of the rest. . . .

But we so far prevailed in opening the folly of these revilers and self-conceited men as that some of them became the laughing-stock of the soldiers before I left them; and when they preached (for great preachers they were) their weakness exposed them to contempt. . . .

As soon as I came to the army they marched speedily down into the west, because the king had no army left but the Lord Goring's there, and they would not suffer the fugitives of Naseby fight to come thither to strengthen them. They came quickly down to Somerton when Goring was at Langport, which lying upon the river, Massey was sent to keep him in on the farther side, while Fairfax attended him on this side with his army. One day they faced each other and did nothing. The next day they came to their ground again. Betwixt the two armies was a narrow lane which went between some meadows in a bottom, and a small brook crossing the lane with a narrow bridge.

Goring planted two or three small pieces at the head of the lane to keep the passage, and there placed his best horse, so that none could come to them but over that narrow bridge and up that steep lane upon the mouth of those pieces. After many hours facing each other, Fairfax's greater ordnance affrighting more than hurting Goring's men, and some musketeers being sent to drive theirs from under the hedges, at last Cromwell bid Whalley send three of his troops to charge the enemy, and he sent three of the general's regiment to second them (all being of Cromwell's old regiment). Whalley sent Major Bethel, Captain Evanson and Captain Grove to charge; Major Desborough with another troop or two came after; they could go but one or two abreast over the bridge. By that time Bethel and Evanson with their troops were got up to the top of the lane; they met with a select party of Goring's best horse and charged them at sword's point whilst you would count three or four hundred, and then put them to retreat. In the flight they pursued them too far to the main body, for the dust was so extreme great (being in the very hottest time of summer) that they that were in it could scarce see each other, but I that stood over them upon the brow of the hill saw all. When they saw themselves upon the face of Goring's army they fled back in haste, and by that time they came to the lane again Captain Grove's troop was ready to stop them and relieve them, and Desborough behind him; whereupon they rallied again and the five or six troops together marched towards all Goring's army. But, before they came to the front, I could discern the rear begin to run, and so beginning in the rear they all fled before they endured any charge, nor was there a blow struck that day but by Bethel's and Evanson's troop (on that side) and a few musketeers in the hedges. Goring's army fled to Bridgwater, and very few of them were either killed or taken in the fight or the pursuit. I happened to be next to Major Harrison as soon as the flight began, and heard him with a loud voice break forth into the praises of God with fluent expressions, as if he had been in a rapture.

Upon this Goring fled further westward (to Exeter) with his army. But Fairfax stayed to besiege Bridgwater; and after two days it was taken by storm. . .

From Bridgwater they went back towards Bristol, where Prince Rupert was, taking Nunny Castle and Bath in the way. At Bristol they continued the siege about a month. After the first three days I fell sick of a fever (the plague being round about my quarters). As soon as I felt my disease I rode six or seven miles back into the country, and the next morning (with much ado) to Bath, where Dr. Venner was my careful physician; and when I was near to death (far from all my acquaintance) it pleased God to restore me. . . I came back to Bristol siege three or four days before the city was taken. The foot which was to storm the works would not go on unless the horse went with them (who had no service to do). So Whalley's regiment was fain to go on to encourage the foot, and to stand to be shot at before the ordnance (but¹ in the night) while the foot did storm the forts, where Major Bethel (who in the last fight had but his thumb shot) had a shot in his thigh of which he died, and was much lamented. The outworks being taken, Prince Rupert yielded up the city upon terms that he might march away with his soldiers, leaving their ordnance and arms.

Upon this the army marched to Sherborn Castle (the Earl of Bristol's house), which after a fortnight's siege they took by storm, and that on a side which one would think could never have been that way taken. While they were there the countrymen, called Clubmen, rose near Shaftesbury, and got upon the top of a hill. A party was sent out against them, who marched up the hill upon them and routed them, though some of the valiantest men were slain in the front.

When Sherborn Castle was taken, part of the army went back and took in a small garrison by Salisbury, called Langford House, and so marched to Winchester Castle, and took that by composition after a week's siege or little more. From thence Cromwell went with a good party to besiege Basing-House (the Marquess of Winchester's), which had frustrated great sieges heretofore. Here Colonel Hammond was taken prisoner into the house, and afterward the house was taken by storm, and he saved the marquess and others; and much riches were taken by the soldiers.

¹ = except.

In the meantime the rest of the army marched down again towards the Lord Goring, and Cromwell came after them.

When we followed the Lord Goring westward, we found that, above all other armies of the king, his soldiers were most hated by the people for their incredible profaneness and their unmerciful plundering (many of them being foreigners). A sober gentleman that I quartered with at South Petherton in Somersetshire averred to me that with him a company of them pricked their fingers and let the blood run into the cup, and drank a health to the devil in it. And no place could I come into but their horrid impiety and outrages made them odious.

The army marched down by Hunnington to Exeter, where I continued near three weeks among them at the siege, and then Whalley's regiment, with the general's, Fleetwood's and others, being sent back, I returned with them and left the siege, which continued till the city was taken. And then the army, following Goring into Cornwall, there forced him to yield to lay down arms, his men going away beyond sea or elsewhere without their arms. And at last Pendennis Castle and all the garrisons there were taken.

In the meantime Whalley was to command the party of horse back to keep in the garrison of Oxford till the army could come to besiege it. And so in the extreme winter he quartered about six weeks in Buckinghamshire, and then was sent to lay siege to Banbury Castle, where Sir William Compton was governor, who had wearied out one long siege before. There I was with them above two months till the castle was taken; and then he was sent to lay siege to Worcester with the help of the Northampton, and Warwick, and Newport Pagnell soldiers who had assisted him at Banbury. At Worcester he lay in siege eleven weeks; and at the same time, the army being come up from the west, lay in siege at Oxford.

By this time Colonel Whalley, though Cromwell's kinsman and commander of the *trusted* regiment, grew odious among the sectarian commanders at the headquarters for my sake; and he was called a Presbyterian, though neither he nor I were of that judgment in several points. . .

All this while, as I had friendly converse with the sober part, so I was still employed with the rest as before, in

preaching, conference and disputing against their confounding errors. . . When we quartered at Agmondesham¹ in Buckinghamshire, some sectaries of Chesham had set up a public meeting as for conference, . and this in the church, by the encouragement of an ignorant sectarian lecturer, one Bramble. . . When this public talking-day came, Bethel's troopers (then Captain Pitchford's) with other sectarian soldiers must be there, to confirm the Chesham men and make men believe that the army was for them. And I thought it my duty to be there also, and took divers sober officers with me to let them see that more of the army were against them than for them. I took the reading-pew and Pitchford's cornet and troopers took the gallery. And there I found a crowded congregation of poor well-meaning people that came in the simplicity of their hearts to be deceived. There did the leader of the Chesham men begin, and afterward Pitchford's soldiers set in, and I alone disputed against them from morning until almost night; for I knew their trick, that if I had but gone out first they would have prated what boasting words they listed when I was gone, and made the people believe that they had baffled me or got the best; therefore I stayed it out till they first rose and went away. The abundance of nonsense which they uttered that day may partly be seen in Mr. Edward's *Gangræna*. . . .

All this while, though I came not near Cromwell, his designs were visible, and I saw him continually acting his part. The lord-general suffered him to govern and do all, and to choose almost all the officers of the army. . . So that by degrees he had headed the greatest part of the army with Anabaptists, Antinomians, Seekers or Separatists at best; and all these he tied together by the point of liberty of conscience, which was the common interest in which they did unite. Yet all the sober party were carried on by his profession that he only promoted the universal interest of the godly, without any distinction or partiality at all. But still, when a place fell void, it was twenty to one a sectary had it, and if a godly man of any other mind or temper had a mind to leave the army he would secretly or openly further it. Yet did he not openly profess what opinion he was of himself; but the most that he said for

¹ = Amersham.

any was for Anabaptism and Antinomianism, which he usually seemed to own. And Harrison, who was then great with him, was for the same opinions. He would not dispute with me at all, but he would in good discourse very fluently pour out himself in the extolling of free-grace, which was savoury to those that had right principles, though he had some misunderstandings of free-grace himself. He was a man of excellent natural parts for affection and oratory, but not well seen in the principles of his religion; of a sanguine complexion, naturally of such a vivacity, hilarity and alacrity as another man hath when he hath drunken a cup too much; but naturally also so far from humble thoughts of himself that it was his ruin.

All these two years that I was in the army even my old bosom friend, that had lived in my house and been dearest to me, James Berry (then captain, and after colonel and major-general, and lord of the Upper House), who had formerly invited me to Cromwell's old troop, did never once invite me to the army at first, nor invite me to his quarters after, nor never once came to visit me nor saw me, save twice or thrice that we met accidentally. . . He was a man, I verily think, of great sincerity before the wars, and of very good natural parts. . But when Cromwell made him his favourite . . his mind, his aim, his talk and all was altered accordingly. . .

After this he was president of the Agitators,¹ and after that major-general and lord as aforesaid; and after that a principal person in the changes and the principal executioner in pulling down Richard Cromwell; and then was one of the governing Council of State. . .

And as he was the chief in pulling down he was one of the first that fell. . . And when the army was melted to nothing, and the king ready to come in, the Council of State imprisoned him because he would not promise to live peaceably; and afterwards he (being one of the four whom General Monk had the worst thoughts of) was closely confined in Scarborough Castle; but being released he became a gardener, and lived in a safer state than in all his greatness.

When Worcester siege was over (having with joy seen Kidderminster and my friends there once again), the

¹ =agents. (To "agitate," in the sense of to "act," now obsolete.)

country being now cleared, my old flock expected that I should return to them and settle in peace among them.

I went to Coventry and called the ministers again together who had voted me into the army. I told them . . the day which I expected is yet to come, and the *greatest service* with the *greatest hazard* is yet before. . . Though I knew it was the greatest hazard of my life, my judgment was for staying among them till the crisis, if their judgment did concur. Whereupon they all voted me to go and leave Kidderminster yet longer, which accordingly I did.

From Worcester I went to London, to Sir Theodore Mayern about my health. He sent me to Tunbridge Wells, and after some stay there to my benefit I went back to London and so to my quarters in Worcestershire where the regiment was.

My quarters fell out to be at Sir Tho. Rous's at Rous Lench, where I had never been before. The Lady Rous was a godly, grave, understanding woman, and entertained me not as a soldier but a friend. From thence I went into Leicestershire, Staffordshire, and at last into Derbyshire. . .

I came to our Major Swallow's quarters at Sir John Cook's house at Melbourn, in the edge of Derbyshire beyond Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in a cold and snowy season; and the cold, together with other things coincident, set my nose on bleeding. When I had bled about a quart or two I opened four veins, but it did no good. I used divers other remedies for several days to little purpose; at last I gave myself a purge, which stopped it. This so much weakened me and altered my complexion that my acquaintance who came to visit me scarce knew me. Coming after so long weakness and frequent loss of blood before, it made the physicians conclude me deplorable¹ after it was stopped, supposing I would never escape a dropsy.

And thus God unavoidably prevented all the effect of my purposes in my last and chiefest opposition of the army, and took me off the very time when my attempt should have begun. My purpose was to have done my best first to take off that regiment which I was with and then, with Captain Lawrence, to have tried upon the General's (in which two were Cromwell's chief confidants), and then

¹ = deplorable, hopeless.

have joined with others of the same mind (for the other regiments were much less corrupted). But the determination of God against it was most observable; for the very time that I was bleeding, the Council of War sat at Nottingham,¹ where (as I have credibly heard) they first began to open their purposes and act their part; and presently after, they entered into their engagement at Triploe Heath. And as I perceived it was the will of God to permit them to go on, so I afterward found that this great affliction was a mercy to myself; for they were so strong and active that I had been likely to have had small success in the attempt, but to have lost my life among them in their fury. And thus I was finally separated from the army.

When I had stayed at Melbourn in my chamber three weeks (being among strangers, and not knowing how to get home) I went to Mr. Nowell's house at Kirkby Mallory in Leicestershire, where with great kindness I was entertained three weeks. By that time the tidings of my weakness came to the Lady Rous in Worcestershire, who sent her servant to seek me out; and when he returned and told her I was far off and he could not find me, she sent him again to find me and bring me thither if I were able to travel. And, in great weakness, thither I made shift to get, where I was entertained with the greatest care and tenderness while I continued the use of means for my recovery; and when I had been there a quarter of a year I returned to Kidderminster. . . .

¹ This is Baxter's mistake or folio misprint for Newmarket.

CHAPTER VI

RETROSPECT

*Continuation of history—Execution of Charles I.—Dunbar
—Worcester—Flight of Charles II.—Triers—Character
of Westminster Assembly—The sects.*

1647–1653

HERE I must look back to the course and affairs of the king, who at the siege of Oxford, having no army left, and knowing that the Scots had more loyalty and stability in their principles than the sectaries, resolved to cast himself upon them, and so escaped to their army in the north. . . They kept him awhile among them with honourable entertainment, till the parliament sent for him, and they saw that the sectaries and the army were glad of it as an occasion to make them odious and to invade their land. And so the terror of the conquering army made them deliver him to the parliament's commissioners. . .

Hereupon, the king being delivered to the parliament, they . desired him to abide awhile at Homeby House in Northamptonshire. While he was here the army was hatching their conspiracy. And on the sudden one Cornet Joyce, with a party of soldiers, fetched away the king, notwithstanding the parliament's order for his security. And this was done as if it had been against Cromwell's will and without any order or consent of theirs; but so far was he from losing his head for such a treason that it proved the means of his preferment. And so far were Cromwell and his soldiers from returning the king in safety that they detained him among them, and kept him with them till they came to Hampton Court, and there they lodged him under the guard of Colonel Whalley, the army quartering all about him. While he was here the mutable hypocrites first pretended an extraordinary care of the king's honour, liberty, safety and conscience. They blamed the austerity of the parliament, who had denied him the attendance of his own chaplains and of his friends in whom

he took most pleasure. They gave liberty for his friends and chaplains to come to him. They pretended that they would save him from the incivilities of the parliament and Presbyterians. Whether this were while they tried what terms they could make with him for themselves, or while they acted any other part, it is certain that the king's old adherents began to extol the army, and to speak against the Presbyterians more distastefully than before. When the parliament offered the king propositions for concord (which Vane's faction made as high and unreasonable as they could, that they might come to nothing), the army, forsooth, offered him proposals of their own which the king liked better; but which of them to treat with he did not know. At last, on the sudden, the judgment of the army changed and they began to cry for *justice* against the king, and with vile hypocrisy to publish their repentance and cry God mercy for their kindness to the king, and confess that they were under a temptation. But in all this Cromwell and Ireton and the rest of the Council of War appeared not. The instruments of all this work must be the common soldiers. Two of the most violent sectaries in each regiment are chosen by the common soldiers, by the name of Agitators, to represent the rest in these great affairs. All these together made a council, of which Colonel James Berry was the president, that they might be used, ruled and dissolved at pleasure. No man that knew them will doubt whether this was done by Cromwell's and Ireton's direction. This Council of Agitators take not only the parliament's work upon themselves, but much more. They draw up a paper called *The Agreement of the People* as the model or form of a new Commonwealth. They have their own printer, and publish abundance of wild pamphlets as changeable as the moon. The thing contrived was an heretical democracy. When Cromwell had awhile permitted them thus to play themselves, partly to please them and confirm them to him, and chiefly to use them in his demolishing work, at last he seemeth to be so much for order and government as to blame them for their disorder, presumption and headiness, as if they had done it without his consent. This emboldeneth the parliament (not to censure them as rebels, but) to rebuke them and prohibit them, and claim their own superiority. And while the parliament

and the Agitators are contending, a letter is secretly sent to Colonel Whalley to intimate that the Agitators had a design suddenly to surprise and murder the king. Some think that this was sent from a real friend; but most think it was contrived by Cromwell to affright the king out of the land or into some desperate course which might give them advantage against him. Colonel Whalley sheweth the letter to the king, which put him into much fear of such ill-governed hands, so that he secretly got horses and slipped away towards the sea with two of his confidants only, who, coming to the sea near Southampton, found that they were disappointed of the vessel expected to transport them, and so were fain to pass over into the Isle of Wight, and there to commit his majesty to the trust of Colonel Robert Hammond, who was governor of a castle there. . . But here Cromwell had the king in a pinfold, and was more secure of him than before. . . .

The king being at the Isle of Wight, the parliament sent him some propositions to be consented to in order to his restoration. The king granted many of them and some he granted not. The Scottish commissioners thought the conditions more dishonourable to the king than was consistent with their covenant and duty, and protested against them; for which the parliament blamed them as hinderers of the desired peace. The chiefest thing which the king stuck at was the utter abolishing of Episcopacy and alienating theirs and the Dean and Chapter's lands. . . .

They seem not to me to have taken the course which should have settled these distracted churches. Instead of disputing against all Episcopacy, they should have changed diocesan prelacy into such an Episcopacy as the conscience of the king might have admitted, and as was agreeable to that which the Church had in the two or three first ages. . .

Archbishop Usher there took the rightest course, who offered the king his reduction of Episcopacy to the form of Presbytery. And he told me himself that before the king had refused it, but at the Isle of Wight he accepted it, and as *he* would not when *others* would, so *others* would not when *he* would. And when our present King Charles II. came in we tendered it for union to him, and then he would not. And thus the true moderate healing terms are

always rejected by them that stand on the higher ground, though accepted by them that are lower and cannot have what they will. . .

The king sending his final answers to the parliament, the parliament had a long debate upon them, whether to acquiesce in them as a sufficient ground for peace. . . The House voted that the king's concessions were a sufficient ground for a personal treaty with him; and had suddenly sent a concluding answer and sent for him up; but at such a crisis it was time for the army to bestir them. Without any more ado, Cromwell and his confidants send Colonel Pride with a party of soldiers to the House and set a guard upon the door; one part of the House (who were for them) they let in; another part they turned away, and told them that they must not come there; and the third part they imprisoned (the soberest worthy members of the House), and all to prevent them from being true to their oaths and covenants and loyal to their king. . . .

And thus when the two parts of the House were ejected and imprisoned, this third part, composed of the Vanists, the Independents and other sects, with the democratical party, was left by Cromwell to do his business under the name of the Parliament of England; but by the people in scorn commonly called the Rump of the Parliament. . .

As the Lords were disaffected to these proceedings, so were the Rump and soldiers to the Lords. So that they passed a vote (supposing that the army would stand by them) to establish the government without a king and House of Lords; and so the Lords dissolved and these Commons sat and did all alone. And being deluded by Cromwell, and verily thinking that he would be for democracy, which they called a Commonwealth, they gratified him in his designs, and themselves in their disloyal distrusts and fears; and they caused a high court of justice to be erected, and sent for the king from the Isle of Wight. Colonel Hammond delivered him, and to Westminster Hall he came and, refusing to own the court and their power to try him, Cook as attorney having pleaded against him, Bradshaw as president and judge recited the charge and condemned him; and before his own gate at Whitehall they erected a scaffold, and before a full assembly of people beheaded him. Wherein appeared the severity of

God, the mutability and uncertainty of worldly things, and the fruits of a sinful nation's provocations, and the infamous effects of error, pride and selfishness, prepared by Satan to be charged hereafter upon reformation and godliness, to the unspeakable injury of the Christian name and Protestant cause, the rejoicing and advantage of the Papists, the hardening of thousands against the means of their own salvation, and the confusion of the actors when their day is come.

The Lord-General Fairfax all this while stood by and, with high resentment, saw his lieutenant do all this by tumultuous soldiers, tricked and overpowered by him. . . . But at the king's death he was in wonderful perplexities, and when Mr. Calamy and some ministers were sent for to resolve him, and would have further persuaded him to rescue the king, his troubles so confounded him that they durst let no man speak to him. And Cromwell kept him (as it was said) in praying and consulting till the stroke was given and it was too late to make resistance. But not long after, when war was determined against Scotland, he laid down his commission and never had to do with the army more; and Cromwell was general in his stead. . . .

The king being thus taken out of the way, Cromwell takes on him to be for a Commonwealth (but all in order to the security of the good people) till he had removed the other impediments which were yet to be removed; so that the Rump presently drew up a form of engagement to be put upon all men, viz., "I do promise to be true and faithful to the Commonwealth as it is now established without a king or House of Lords." So we must take the Rump for an *established Commonwealth* and promise fidelity to them. . . .

For my own part, though I kept the town and parish of Kidderminster from taking the Covenant . . . yet I could not judge it seemly for him that believed there is a God to play fast and loose with a dreadful oath. .

Therefore I spake and preached against the engagement, and dissuaded men from taking it. . . .

Some episcopal divines that were not so scrupulous, it seems, as we, did write for it (private manuscripts which I have seen) and plead the irresistibility of the imposers, and they found starting-holes in the terms. . . . But I

endeavoured to evince that this is mere juggling and jesting with matters too great to be jested with . . and that by such interpretations and stretchings of conscience any treasonable oath or promise may be taken, and no bonds of society can signify much with such interpreters. . . .

The king being dead, his son was by right immediately king (and from that time he dateth his reign). The Scots send messengers to him to come over to them and take the crown; but they treat with him first for his taking of the Covenant, and renouncing the wars and the blood that was shed in them by his father's party. . . .

What transactions there were between the king and the Scots for the expediting of his coronation, and what preparations were made for an army to defend him, and what differences among the parties hereabouts, I shall not describe, there being enow of them that were upon the place who can do it better. . . .

When the soldiers were going against the king and Scots I wrote letters to some of them to tell them of their sin, and desired them at last to begin to know themselves. . . Some of them were startled at these letters and (O blindness!) thought me an uncharitable censurer that would say that they could kill the godly, even when they were on their march to do it. For how bad soever they spoke of the Cavaliers (and not without too much desert as to their morals), they confessed that abundance of the Scots were godly men. And afterwards those that I wrote to better understood me.

At the same time the Rump (or Commonwealth), who so much abhorred persecution and were for liberty of conscience, made an order that all ministers should keep *their* days of humiliation, to fast and pray for their success in Scotland, and that we should keep their days of thanksgiving for their victories; and this upon pain of sequestration. So that we all expected to be turned out; but they did not execute it upon any save one in our parts.

For my part, instead of praying and preaching for them when any of the committee or soldiers were my hearers, I laboured to help them to understand what a crime it was to force men to pray for the success of those that were violating their covenant and loyalty, and going in such a cause to kill their brethren. . .

My own hearers were all satisfied with my doctrine, but the committee men look sour but let me alone. And the soldiers said I was so like to Love that I would not be right till I was shorter by the head. . .

Not far from this time the London ministers were called traitors by the Rump and soldiers for plotting for the king (a strange kind of treason!). . .

Mr. Love was tried at a court of justice, where Edm. Prideaux, a member and solicitor for the Commonwealth, did think his place allowed him to plead against the life and blood of the innocent. Mr. Love was condemned and beheaded, dying neither timorously nor proudly in any desperate bravado, but with as great alacrity and fearless quietness and freedom of speech as if he had but gone to bed, and had been as little concerned as the standers-by. . .

This blow sunk deeper towards the root of the New Commonwealth than will easily be believed, and made them grow odious to almost < all > the religious party in the land except the sectaries. . . The most of the ministers and good people of the land did look upon the New Commonwealth as tyranny, and were more alienated from them than before.

The Lord Fairfax now laid down his commission and would have no more of the honour of being Cromwell's instrument or mask, when he saw that he must buy it at so dear a rate. And so Cromwell with applause received a commission and entered upon his place.

And into Scotland he hasteneth, and there he maketh his way near Edinburgh, where the Scots army lay. But after long skirmishing and expectations, when he could neither draw the Scots out of their trenches to a fight nor yet pass forward, his soldiers contracted sicknesses and were impatient of the poverty of the country, and so with a weakened, ragged army he drew off to return to England, and had the Scots but let him go, or cautelously¹ followed him, they had kept their peace and broken his honour. But they drew out and followed him and, overtaking him near Dunbar, did force him to a fight by engaging his rear; in which fight, being not of equal fortitude, they were totally routed, their foot taken and their horse pursued to Edinburgh. . . .

¹ = cautiously.

Cromwell being thus called back to Edinburgh driveth the Scots to Sterling beyond the river, where they fortify themselves. He besiegeth the impregnable castle of Edinburgh and winneth it. .

After this Cromwell passeth some of his men over the river, and after them most of the rest. The king, with the Scots army, being unable to give him battle after such discouragements, takes the opportunity to haste away with what force they had towards England. . . .

The king came by the way of Lancashire, and summoned Shrewsbury in vain as he passed by through Shropshire; and when all the country thought that he was hastening to London (where all men supposed he would have attained his ends, increased his strength, and had no resistance) he turned to Worcester, and there stayed to refresh his army, Cromwell's forces being within a few days' march of him.

The army passed most by Kidderminster (a field's breadth off) and the rest through it. Colonel Graves sent two or three messages to me, as from the king, to come to him; and after, when he was at Worcester, some others were sent. But I was at that time under so great an affliction of sore eyes that I was not scarce able to see the light nor fit to stir out-of-doors. And being not much doubtful of the issue which followed, I thought if I had been able it would have been no service at all to the king, it being so little on such a sudden that I could add to his assistance.

When the king had stayed a few days at Worcester, Cromwell came with his army to the east side of the city, and after that made a bridge of boats over Severn, to hinder them from forage on the other side; but because so great an army could not long endure to be pent up, the king resolved to charge Cromwell's men; and a while the Scots foot did charge very gallantly, and some chief persons among the horse, the Marquis Hamilton (late Earl of Lanerick¹) being slain. But at last the hope of security so near their backs encouraged the king's army to retreat into the city, and Cromwell's soldiers followed them so close at the heels that Major Swallow of Whalley's regiment first, and others after him, entered Sidbury Gate with them; and so the whole army fled through the city quite

¹ = Lanark.

away, many being trodden down and slain in the streets; so that the king was fain to fly with them northward, the Lord Willmot, the Earl of Lauderdale and many others of his lords and commanders with him. Kidderminster being but eleven miles from Worcester, the flying army passed, some of them through the town and some by it. I was newly gone to bed when the noise of the flying horse acquainted us of the overthrow; and a piece of one of Cromwell's troops that guarded Bewdley Bridge, having tidings of it, came into our streets and stood in the open market-place before my door to surprise those that passed by. And so when many hundreds of the flying army came together, when the thirty troopers cried "Stand!" and fired at them, they either hasted away or cried quarter, not knowing in the dark what number it was that charged them. And so, as many were taken there as so few men could lay hold on. And till midnight the bullets flying towards my door and windows, and the sorrowful fugitives hasting by for their lives, did tell me the calamitousness of war.

The king parted at last from most of his lords and went to Boscobel by the White Ladies, where he was hid in an oak, in manner sufficiently declared to the world; and thence to Mosely, and so with Mrs. Lane away as a traveller, and escaped all the searchers' hands, till he came safe beyond sea, as is published at large by divers. . . .

Cromwell having thus far seemed to be a servant to the parliament, and < to > work for his masters the Rump or Commonwealth, doth next begin to show whom he served, and take that impediment also out of the way. To which end he first doth by them as he did by the Presbyterians, make them odious by hard speeches of them throughout his army. . . .

For Cromwell, impatient of any more delay, suddenly took Harrison and some soldiers with him (as if God had impelled him), and as in a rapture went into the House and reproveth the members for their faults, and pointing to Vane calls him a juggler, and to Henry Martin and calls him whoremaster, and, having two such to instance in, taketh it for granted that they were all unfit to continue in the government of the Commonwealth; and out he turneth them. And so ended the government of the Rump, and no sort of people expressed any great offence

that they were cast out, though all, save the sectaries and the army almost, did take him to be a traitor that did it.

The young Commonwealth being already headless, you might think that nothing was left to stand between Cromwell and the crown; for a governor there must be, and who should be thought fitter? But yet there was another pageant to be played, which had a double end: (1) to make the necessity of his governing undeniable, and (2) to make his own soldiers at last out of love with democracy, or at least to make them hateful that adhered to it. A parliament must be called, but the ungodly people are not to be trusted with the choice; therefore the soldiers, as more religious, must be the choosers; and two out of a county are chosen by the officers upon the advice of their sectarian friends in the country. This was called, in contempt, the Little Parliament.

This conventicle made an Act (as I remember) that magistrates should marry people instead of ministers (yet not prohibiting the ministers to do their part). . . .

The intelligent sort by this time did fully see that Cromwell's design was, by causing and permitting destruction to hang over us, to necessitate the nation, whether they would or not, to take him for their governor, that he might be their protector, being resolved that we should be saved by him or perish. He made more use of the wild-headed sectaries than barely to *fight* for him. They now serve him as much by their heresies, their enmity to learning and ministry, their pernicious demands which tended to confusion, as they had done before by their valour in the field. He can now conjure up at pleasure some terrible apparition, of Agitators, Levellers or suchlike, who, as they affrighted the king from Hampton Court, shall affright the people to fly to *him* for refuge; that the hand that wounded them may heal them. For now he exclaimeth against the giddiness of these unruly men, and earnestly pleadeth for order and government, and will needs become the patron of the ministry, yet so as to secure all others of their liberty. . . .

I did seasonably and moderately by preaching and printing condemn the usurpation, and the deceit which was the means to bring it to pass. I did in open conference declare Cromwell and his adherents to be guilty of treason and rebellion, aggravated with perfidiousness and hypo-

crisy, to be abhorred of all good and sober men. But yet I did not think it my duty to rave against him in the pulpit, nor to do this so unseasonably and imprudently as might irritate him to mischief. And the rather because, as he kept up his approbation of a godly life in the general, and of all that was good, except that which the interest of his sinful cause engaged him to be against; so I perceived that it was his design to do good in the main, and to promote the Gospel and the interest of godliness more than any had done before him, except in those particulars which his own interest was against. And it was the principal means that henceforward he trusted to for his own establishment, even by *doing good*, that the people might love him, or at least be willing to have his government *for that good*, who were against it as it was *usurpation*. And I made no question at all but that, when the rightful governor was restored, the people that had adhered to him (being so extremely irritated) would cast out multitudes of the ministers, and undo the good which the usurper had done, because he did it, and would bring abundance of calamity upon the land. . . .

The Little Parliament having resigned their commission to Cromwell, that we might not be ungoverned, a juncto of officers, and I know not who (nor ever could learn, but that Lambert and Berry were two chief men in it), did draw up a writing called *The Instrument of the Government of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland*. This instrument made Oliver Cromwell Lord Protector of the Commonwealth. . . .

I shall for brevity overpass the particular mention of the parliaments summoned by Cromwell, of their displeasing him by ravelling his instrument and other means, and of his rough and resolute dissolving them.

One of the chief works he did was the purging of the ministry, of which I shall say somewhat more. And here I suppose the reader to understand that the Synod of Westminster was dissolved with the parliament, and therefore a society of ministers, with some others, were chosen by Cromwell to sit at Whitehall, under the name of Triers, who were mostly Independents, but some sober Presbyterians with them, and had power to try all that came for institution or induction, and without their appro-

bation none were admitted. This assembly of Triers examined, themselves, all that were able to come up to London; but if any were unable, or were of doubtful qualifications between worthy and unworthy, they used to refer them to some ministers in the county where they lived, and to approve them if *they* approved them.

And because this assembly of Triers is most heavily accused and reproached by some men, I shall speak the truth of them, and suppose my word will be the rather taken because most of them took me for one of their boldest adversaries as to their opinions, and because I was known to disown their power, insomuch that I refused to try any under them upon their reference, except a very few whose importunity and necessity moved *me* (they being such as, for their episcopal judgment or some such cause, the Triers were like to have rejected). The truth is, . . . to give them their due, they did abundance of good to the Church. They saved many a congregation from ignorant, ungodly, drunken teachers. . . . So that, though they were many of them somewhat partial for the Independents, Separatists, Fifth Monarchy men and Anabaptists, and against the Prelatists and Arminians, yet so great was the benefit above the hurt which they brought to the Church, that many thousands of souls blessed God for the faithful ministers whom they let in, and grieved when the Prelatists afterward cast them out again. . . .

And because I have passed it by before, I shall say something of the Westminster Assembly here. This Synod was not a Convocation according to the diocesan way of government, nor was it called by the votes of the ministers according to the Presbyterian way; but the parliament, not intending to call an assembly which should pretend a divine right to make obliging laws or canons to bind their brethren, but an ecclesiastical council to be advisers to themselves, did think that they best knew who were the fittest to give them advice, and therefore chose them all themselves. . . . The Prolocutor or Moderator was Dr. William Twisse (a man very famous for his scholastical wit and writings in a very smooth triumphant style). The divines there congregate were men of eminent learning and godliness, and ministerial abilities and fidelity. And being not worthy to be one of them myself, I may the

more freely speak that truth which I know, even in the face of malice and envy, that, as far as I am able to judge by the information of all history of that kind, and by any other evidences left us, the Christian world, since the days of the Apostles, had never a Synod of more excellent divines (taking one thing with another) than this Synod and the Synod of Dort were. . . .

For my own part, as highly as I honour the men, I am not of their mind in every point of the government which they would have set up, and some words in their catechism I could wish had been more clear; and, above all, I could wish that the parliament and their more skilful hand had done more than was done to heal our breaches, and had hit upon the right way either to unite with the Episcopal¹ and Independents (which was possible, as distant as they are), or at least had pitched on the terms that are fit for universal concord and left all to come in upon those terms that would. But for all this dissent I must testify my love and honour to the persons of such great sincerity and eminent ministerial sufficiency as were Gataker, Vines, Burgess, White, and the greater part of that assembly. . . .

To return from this digression to the proceedings of Cromwell, when he was made Lord Protector he had the policy not to detect and exasperate the ministers and others that consented not to his government (having seen what a stir the engagement had before made); but he let men live quietly, without putting any oaths of fidelity upon them, except his parliament's, for those must not enter the House till they had sworn fidelity to him. The sectarian party in his army and elsewhere he chiefly trusted to and pleased, till by the people's submission and quietness he thought himself well settled. And then he began to undermine them, and by degrees to work them out. . . .

In England Cromwell connived at his old friend Harrison, while he made himself the head of the Anabaptists and fanatics here, till he saw it would be an applauded acceptable thing to the nation to suppress him, and then he doth it easily in a trice, and maketh him contemptible who but yesterday thought himself not much below him. The same he doth also as easily by Lambert and layeth him by.

In these times (especially since the Rump reigned)

¹ = Episcopalians.

sprang up five sects, at least, whose doctrines were almost the same, but they fell into several shapes and names: (1) the Vanists, (2) the Seekers, (3) the Ranters, (4) the Quakers, (5) the Behmenists.

The Vanists (for I know not by what other name to make them known), who were Sir Henry Vane's disciples, first sprang up under him in New England when he was governor there. . . .

His unhappiness lay in this, that his doctrines were so cloudily formed and expressed that few could understand them, and therefore he had but few true disciples. . Mr. Sterry is thought to be of his mind, as he was his intimate; . and was so famous for obscurity in preaching . that he thereby proved almost barren also, and *vanity* and *sterility* were never more happily conjoined. . . .

The second sect which then rose up was that called Seekers. These taught that our Scripture was uncertain; that present miracles are necessary to faith; that our ministry is null and without authority and our worship and ordinances unnecessary or vain; the true Church, ministry, Scripture and ordinances being lost, for which they are now seeking. . . .

The third sect were the Ranters. These also made it their business, as the former, to set up the light of nature under the name of Christ in Men, and to dishonour and cry down the Church, the Scripture, the present ministry, and our worship and ordinances; and called men to hearken to Christ within them. But withal they conjoined a cursed doctrine of libertinism, which brought them to all abominable filthiness of life. They taught as the Familists, that God regardeth not the actions of the outward man, but of the heart, and that to the pure all things are pure (even things forbidden). And so, as allowed by God, they spake most hideous words of blasphemy; and many of them committed whoredom commonly, insomuch that a matron of great note for godliness and sobriety, being perverted by them, turned so shameless a whore that she was carted in the streets of London. . . .

And that was the fourth sect, the Quakers, who were but the Ranters turned from horrid profaneness and blasphemy to a life of extreme austerity on the other side. Their doctrines were mostly the same with the Ranters. They

make the light which every man hath within him to be his sufficient rule, and consequently the Scripture and ministry are set light by; they speak much for the dwelling and working of the Spirit in us, but little of justification and the pardon of sin, and our reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ; they pretend their dependence on the Spirit's conduct, against set times of prayer and against sacraments, and against their due esteem of Scripture and ministry; they will not have the Scripture called the Word of God; their principal zeal lieth in railing at the ministers as hirelings, deceivers, false prophets, etc., and in refusing to swear before a magistrate, or to put off their hat to any, or to say "You" instead of "Thou" or "Thee," which are their words to all. . . . Many Franciscan friars and other Papists have been proved to be disguised speakers in their assemblies, and to be among them, and it's like are the very soul of all these horrible delusions. But of late one William Penn is become their leader, and would reform the sect and set up a kind of ministry among them.

The fifth sect are the Behmenists, whose opinions go much toward the way of the former, for the sufficiency of the light of nature, the salvation of heathens as well as Christians, and a dependence on revelations, etc. But they are fewer in number, and seem to have attained to greater meekness and conquest of passions than any of the rest. Their doctrine is to be seen in Jacob Behmen's books, by him that hath nothing else to do than to bestow a great deal of time to understand him that was not willing to be easily understood, and to know that his bombasted words do signify nothing more than before was easily known by common familiar terms. . . .

Also the Socinians made some increase by the ministry of one Mr. Biddle, sometime schoolmaster in Gloucester, who wrote against the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, and afterwards of Christ; whose followers inclined much to mere deism and infidelity.

Having gone on thus far with the general hints of the history of those times, because I would not obscure them by the interpositions of my own affairs, I now return to these, and shall set them also together that they may be the better understood.

I have related how, after my bleeding of a gallon of blood by the nose, I was left weak at Sir Thomas Rous's house at Rous Lench, where I was taken up with daily medicines to prevent a dropsy. And being conscious that my time had not been improved to the service of God as I desired it had been, I put up many an earnest prayer to God that he would restore me and use me more successfully in his work. And blessed be that mercy which heard my groans in the day of my distress, and granted my desires and wrought my deliverance, when men and means failed, and gave me opportunity to celebrate his praise. . . .

When I was able (after about five months) to go abroad, I went to Kidderminster. . . .

CHAPTER VII

THE KIDDERMINSTER MINISTRY—SUCCESS AND OPPOSITION

*A gold bullet—Labours, successes and advantages—Sir
Ralph Clare—Unanimous ministers.*

1647-1660

IN my labours at Kidderminster after my return I did all under languishing weakness, being seldom an hour free from pain. . .

Many a time have I been brought very low and received the sentence of death in myself, when my poor, honest, praying neighbours have met, and upon their fasting and earnest prayers I have been recovered. Once when I had continued weak three weeks, and was unable to go abroad, the very day that they prayed for me, being Good Friday, I recovered and was able to preach and administer the sacrament the next Lord's-day, and was better after it (it being the first time that ever I administered it). And ever after that, whatever weakness was upon me, when I had (after preaching) administered that sacrament to many hundred people I was much revived and eased of my infirmities. . . .

Another time, having read in Dr. Gerhard the admirable effects of the swallowing of a gold bullet upon his own father in a case like mine, I got a gold bullet and swallowed it (between twenty and thirty shillings' weight); and having taken it, I knew not how to be delivered of it again. I took clysters and purges for about three weeks, but nothing stirred it. . . But at last my neighbours set a day apart to fast and pray for me, and I was freed from my danger in the beginning of that day. . . .

Once riding upon a great hot-mettled horse, as I stood on a sidelong pavement in Worcester, the horse reared up and both his hinder feet slipped from under him, so that the full weight of the body of the horse fell upon my leg, which yet was not broken, but only bruised; when consider-

ing the place, the stones, the manner of the fall, it was a wonder that my leg was not broken all to pieces.

Another time, as I sat in my study, the weight of my greatest folio books broke down three or four of the highest shelves, when I sat close under them, and they fell down on every side me, and not one of them hit me save one upon the arm; whereas the place, the weight and greatness of the books was such, and my head just under them, that it was a wonder they had not beaten out my brains, one of the shelves right over my head having the six volumes of Dr. Walton's *Oriental Bible* and all Austin's¹ Works, and the *Bibliotheca Patrum* and *Marlorate*, etc.

Another time I had such a fall from a high place without much hurt, which, should I describe it, it would seem a wonder that my brains were whole. All these I mention as obliged to record the mercies of my great Preserver to his praise and glory. . .

I shall next record, to the praise of my Redeemer, the comfortable employment and successes which he vouchsafed me during my abode at Kidderminster, under all these weaknesses. And (1) I will mention my employment, (2) my successes, and (3) those advantages by which under God it was procured, in order.

(1) I preached before the wars twice each Lord's-day; but after the war but once, and once every Thursday, besides occasional sermons. Every Thursday evening my neighbours that were most desirous and had opportunity met at my house, and there one of them repeated the sermon, and afterwards they proposed what doubts any of them had about the sermon, or any other case of conscience, and I resolved their doubts; and last of all I caused sometimes one and sometimes another of them to pray (to exercise them); and sometimes I prayed with them myself, which (beside singing a psalm) was all they did. And once a week also some of the younger sort, who were not fit to pray in so great an assembly, met among a few, more privately, where they spent three hours in prayer together; every Saturday night they met at some of their houses to repeat the sermon of the last Lord's-day, and to pray and prepare themselves for the following day. . . Two days every week my assistant and I myself took fourteen

¹ = Augustine's.

families between us for private catechising and conference (he going through the parish, and the town coming to me). . . .

Besides all this I was forced five or six years, by the people's necessity, to practise physic. A common pleurisy happening one year, and no physician being near, I was forced to advise them, to save their lives; and I could not afterwards avoid the importunity of the town and country round about. And because I never once took a penny of anyone, I was crowded with patients, so that almost twenty would be at my door at once; and though God by more success than I expected so long encouraged me, yet at last I could endure it no longer, partly because it hindered my other studies, and partly because the very fear of miscarrying and doing anyone harm did make it an intolerable burden to me. So that after some years' practice I procured a godly, diligent physician to come and live in the town, and bound myself by promise to practise no more (unless in consultation with him in case of any seeming necessity). And so with that answer I turned them all off and never meddled with it more.

But all these my labours (except my private conferences with the families), even preaching and preparing for it, were but my recreations and, as it were, the work of my spare hours. For my writings were my chiefest daily labour, which yet went the more slowly on that I never one hour had an amanuensis to dictate to, and specially because my weakness took up so much of my time. . . . All which, besides times of family duties, and prayer, and eating, etc., leaveth me but little time to study, which hath been the greatest external personal affliction of all my life. . . .

(2) I have mentioned my sweet and acceptable employment; let me, to the praise of my gracious Lord, acquaint you with some of my success. And I will not suppress it, though I foreknow that the malignant will impute the mention of it to pride and ostentation. For it is the sacrifice of thanksgiving which I owe to my most gracious God, which I will not deny him for fear of being censured as proud, lest I prove myself proud indeed, while I cannot undergo the imputation of pride in the performance of my thanks for such undeserved mercies.

My public preaching met with an attentive diligent auditory. . .

The congregation was usually full, so that we were fain to build five galleries after my coming thither, the church itself being very capacious, and the most commodious and convenient that ever I was in. Our private meetings also were full. On the Lord's-days there was no disorder to be seen in the streets, but you might hear an hundred families singing psalms and repeating sermons as you passed through the streets. In a word, when I came thither first there was about one family in a street that worshipped God and called on his name, and when I came away there were some streets where there was not passed one family in the side of a street that did not so, and that did not, by professing serious godliness, give us hopes of their sincerity. And those families which were the worst, being inns and alehouses, usually *some persons* in each house did seem to be religious. . . .

And in my poor endeavours with my brethren in the ministry my labours were not lost. . . . Yea, the mercy was yet greater in that it was of farther public benefit. For some Independents and Anabaptists that had before conceited that parish churches were the great obstruction of all true Church order and discipline, and that it was impossible to bring them to any good consistency, did quite change their minds when they saw what was done at Kidderminster. . . .

(3) Having related my comfortable successes in this place, I shall next tell you by what and how many advantages this much was effected. . .

One advantage was that I came to a people that never had any awakening ministry before (but a few formal cold sermons of the curate); for if they had been hardened under a powerful ministry and been sermon-proof I should have expected less.

Another advantage was that at first I was in the vigour of my spirits and had naturally a familiar moving voice (which is a great matter with the common hearers); and doing all in bodily weakness, as a dying man, my soul was the more easily brought to seriousness, and to preach as a dying man to dying men. . . . Another, and the greatest advantage, was the change

that was made in the public affairs by the success of the wars. . . .

For my part, I bless God who gave me, even under an usurper whom I opposed, such liberty and advantage to preach his Gospel with success, which I cannot have under a king to whom I have sworn and performed true subjection and obedience; yea, which no age since the Gospel came into this land did before possess, as far as I can learn from history. Sure I am that when it became a matter of reputation and honour to be godly it abundantly furthered the successes of the ministry. Yea, and I shall add this much more for the sake of posterity, that as much as I have said and written against licentiousness in religion, and for the magistrates' power in it, and though I think that land most happy whose rulers use their authority for Christ as well as for the civil peace, yet in comparison of the rest of the world I shall think that land happy that hath but bare liberty to be as good as they are willing to be; and if countenance and maintenance be but added to liberty, and tolerated errors and sects be but forced to keep the peace and not to oppose the substantial of Christianity, I shall not hereafter much fear such toleration, nor despair that truth will bear down adversaries. . . .

And our unity and concord was a great advantage to us, and our freedom from those sects and heresies which many other places were infected with. We had no private church, though we had private meetings; we had not pastor against pastor, nor church against church, nor sect against sect, nor Christian against Christian. . . . But we were all of one mind, and mouth and way. Not a Separatist, Anabaptist, Antinomian, etc., in the town! . . .

And it was a great advantage to me that my neighbours were of such a trade as allowed them time enough to read or talk of holy things; for the town liveth upon the weaving of Kidderminster stuffs, and as they stand in their loom they can set a book before them or edify one another. . . .

And I found that my single life afforded me much advantage; for I could the easilier take my people for my children, and think all that I had too little for them, in that I had no children of my own to tempt me to another way of using it. And being discharged from the most of family

cares (keeping but one servant) I had the greater vacancy and liberty for the labours of my calling. . . .

Another advantage to me was the quality of the sinners of the place. There were two drunkards almost at the next doors to me, who (one by night and the other by day) did constantly, every week if not twice or thrice a week, roar and rave in the streets like stark-madmen; and when they have been laid in the stocks or gaol they have been as bad as soon as ever they came out. And these were so beastly and ridiculous that they made that sin (of which we were in most danger) the more abhorred. . . .

And the exercise of church-discipline was no small furtherance of the people's good; for I found plainly that without it I could not have kept the religious sort from separations and divisions. . . .

About six or seven young men did join with us, who were addicted to tippling, and one of them was a weak-headed fellow who was a common notorious drunkard. We could not refuse them . but we told him that he was a notorious drunkard, that we must presently admonish him. . He lamented his sin with great aggravation, and promised amendment, but quickly returned to it again. We admonished him again and again, and laboured to bring him to contrition and resolution, and he would still confess it and still go on. I warned him publicly, and prayed for him several days in the church, but he went on in his drunkenness still. At last I declared him unfit for the Church's Communion, and required them to avoid him accordingly (for this was all we did, whether you will call it excommunication or not), endeavouring to convince him of his misery and of the necessity of true repentance and reformation. . . .

The drunkard before-mentioned, after his ejection, when he was drunk would stand at the market-place and, like a Quaker, cry out against the town and take upon him to prophesy God's judgments against them, and would rage at my door, and rail and curse. And once he followed me as I went to church, and laid hands on me in the church-yard with a purpose to have killed me; but it fell out that he had hold only of my cloak, which I unbuttoned and left with him; and before his fury could do any more (it being the fair-day) there were some strangers by, in the

churchyard, who dragged him to the magistrate and the stocks. And thus he continued raging against me about a year, and then died of a fever in horror of conscience. . . .

Another advantage which I found to my success was by ordering my doctrine to them in a suitableness to the main end, and yet so as might suit their dispositions and diseases. . . . And yet I did usually put in something in my sermon which was above their own discovery, and which they had not known before; and this I did that they might be kept humble and still perceive their ignorance and be willing to keep in a learning state. (For when preachers tell their people of no more than they know, and do not show that they excel them in knowledge, and easily overtop them in abilities, the people will be tempted to turn preachers themselves, and think that they have learnt all that the ministers can teach them, and are as wise as they; and they will be apt to condemn¹ their teachers and wrangle with all their doctrines, and set their wits against them, and hear them as censurers and not as disciples, to their own undoing and to the disturbance of the church; and they will easily draw disciples after them. The bare authority of the clergy will not serve the turn without overtopping ministerial abilities.) And I did this also to increase their knowledge and also to make religion pleasant to them, by a daily addition to their former light, and to draw them on with desire and delight. . . .

Another help to my success was that my people were not rich. . . .

And it is the poor that receive the glad tidings of the Gospel, and that are usually *rich in faith*, and *heirs* of the heavenly riches which God hath promised to them that love him (James ii. 5). "Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?" As Mr. George Herbert saith, in his *Church Militant*:

Gold and the Gospel never did agree:
Religion always sides with poverty.

Usually the rich are proud and obstinate, and will not endure the due conduct of the ministry. Let them be never so ignorant, they must not be crossed in their conceits and way; and if they be, they storm and raise persecution upon

¹ = despise.

it, or at least draw away a faction after them. Let them be never so guilty (unless it be some swinish inexcusable sin) they will not endure to be told of it. . . Christ knew what he said when he said, "How hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven! Even as a camel through the eye of a needle." . . One knight (Sir R. C.¹) which lived among us did more to hinder my greater successes than a multitude of others could have done. Though he was an old man, of great courtship and civility, and very temperate as to diet, apparel and sports, and seldom would swear any louder than "By his troth," etc., and showed me much personal reverence and respect (beyond my desert), and we conversed together with love and familiarity; yet (having no relish of this preciseness and extemporary praying and making so much ado for heaven, nor liking that which went beyond the pace of *saying the Common Prayer*, and also the *interest of himself* and his civil and ecclesiastical parties, leading him to be ruled by Dr. Hammond) his coming but once a day to church on the Lord's-days, and his abstaining from the sacrament, etc., as if we kept not sufficiently to the old way, and because we used not the Common Prayer Book when it would have caused us to be sequestered, did cause a great part of the parish to follow him and do as he did, when else our success and concord would have been much more happy than it was. And yet civility and yielding much beyond others of his party (sending his family to be catechised and personally instructed) did sway with the worst almost to do the like. Indeed, we had two other persons of quality that came from other places to live there, and were truly and judiciously religious, who did much good (Colonel John Bridges and at last Mrs. Hanmer). For when the rich are indeed religious and overcome their temptations, as they may be supposed better than others because their conquest is greater, so they may do more good than others because their talents are more. But such (comparatively) are always few. . . .

And it much furthered my success that I stayed still in this one place (near two years before the wars and above fourteen years after). For he that removeth oft from place to place may sow good seed in many places, but is

¹ = Sir Ralph Clare.

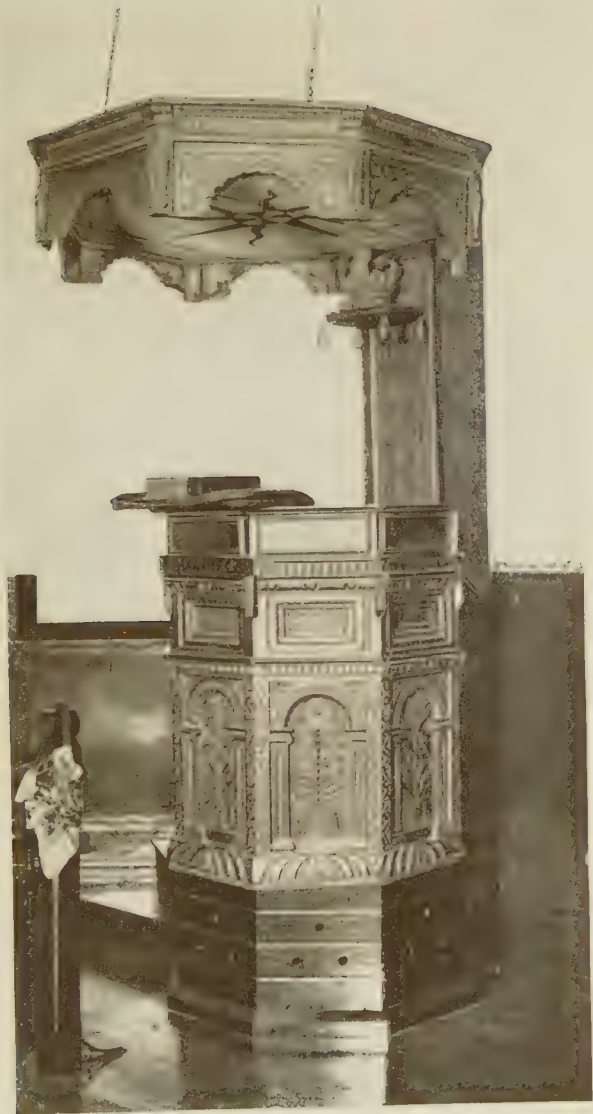
not like to see much fruit in any unless some other skilful hand shall follow him to water it. It was a great advantage to me to have almost all the religious people of the place of my own instructing and informing, and that they were not formed into erroneous and factious principles before, and that I stayed to see them grown up to some confirmedness and maturity. . . .

And I must add this to the true information of posterity, that God did so wonderfully bless the labours of his *unanimous faithful ministers* that had it not been for the faction of the Prelatists on one side that drew men off, and the factions of the giddy and turbulent sectaries on the other side . . . England had been like in a quarter of an age to have become a land of saints and a pattern of holiness to all the world, and the unmatched paradise of the earth. Never were such fair opportunities to sanctify a nation lost and trodden underfoot as have been in this land of late. Woe be to them that were the causes of it!

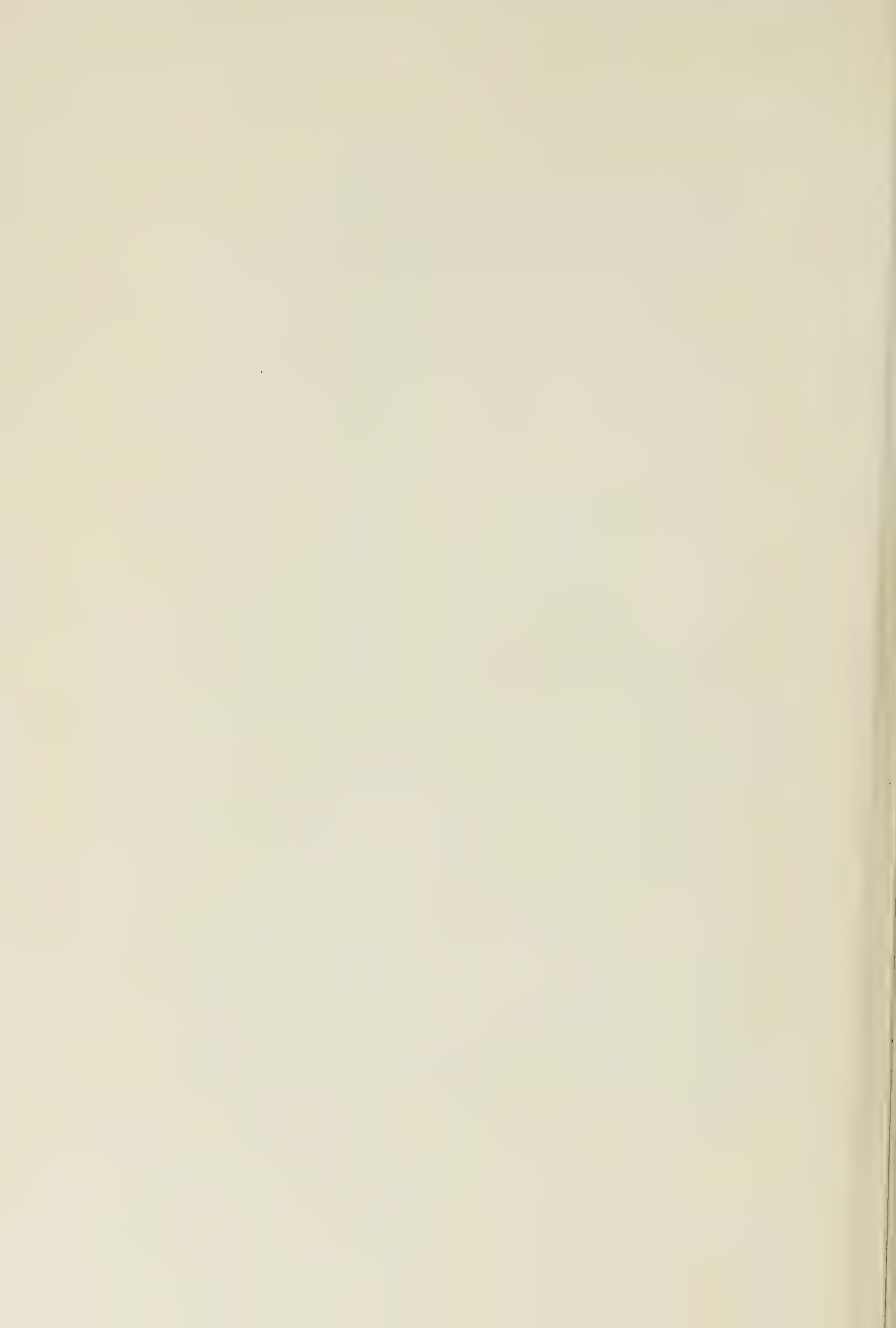
In our Association in this county, though we made our terms large enough for all, Episcopal,¹ Presbyterians and Independents, there was not one Presbyterian joined with us that I know of (for I knew but of one in all the county, Mr. Thomas Hall), nor one Independent (though two or three honest ones said nothing against us), nor one of the New Prelatical way (Dr. Hammond's), but three or four moderate Conformists that were for the old Episcopacy; and all the rest were mere Catholics, men of no faction nor siding with any party, but owning that which was good in all as far as they could discern it; and upon a concord in so much, laying out themselves for the great ends of their ministry, the people's edification.

And the increase of sectaries among us was much through the weakness or the faultiness of ministers. And it made me remember that sects have most abounded when the Gospel hath most prospered, and God hath been doing the greatest works in the world. . . . He that never regardeth the Word of God is not like to err much about it. Men will sooner fall out about gold or pearls than swine or asses will. . . .

¹ = Episcopalians.



BAXTER'S PULPIT, FORMERLY IN BAXTER'S PARISH CHURCH OF
ST. MARY'S AND ALL SAINTS', KIDDERMINSTER, NOW IN THE
VESTRY OF THE NEW MEETING CHURCH, KIDDERMINSTER



CHAPTER VIII

DEATH AND CHARACTER OF CROMWELL

Richard Cromwell—Entry of General Monk—The Restoration
“without one bloody nose.”

1658-1660

I COME now to the end of Cromwell's reign, who died (of a fever) before he was aware. He escaped the attempts of many that sought to have despatched him sooner, but could not escape the stroke of God when his appointed time was come. . .

Never man was higher extolled, and never man was baselier reported of and vilified than this man. No (mere) man was *better* and *worse* spoken of than he, according as men's interests led their judgments. The soldiers and sectaries most highly magnified him till he began to seek the crown and the establishment of his family. And then there were so many that would be half-kings themselves that a king did seem intolerable to them. The Royalists abhorred him as a most perfidious hypocrite, and the Presbyterians thought him little better in his management of public matters.

If after so many others I may speak my opinion of him, I think that, having been a prodigal in his youth and afterward changed to a zealous religiousness, he meant honestly in the main, and was pious and conscionable in the main course of his life till prosperity and success corrupted him; that, at his first entrance into the wars, being but a captain of horse, he had a special care to get religious men into his troop. These men were of greater understanding than common soldiers, and therefore were more apprehensive of the importance and consequence of the war, and making not money but that which they took for the public felicity to be their end, they were the more engaged to be valiant; for he that maketh money his end doth esteem his life above his pay, and therefore is like enough to save it by

flight when danger comes, if possibly he can; but he that maketh the felicity of Church and State his end esteemeth it above his life, and therefore will the sooner lay down his life for it. And men of parts and understanding know how to manage their business, and know that flying is the surest way to death, and that standing to it is the likeliest way to escape, there being many usually that fall in flight for one that falls in valiant fight. These things it's probable Cromwell understood, and that none would be such engaged valiant men as the religious.¹ But yet I conjecture that, at his first choosing such men into his troop, it was the very esteem and love of religious men that principally moved him, and the avoiding of those disorders, mutinies, plunderings and grievances of the country which deboist² men in armies are commonly guilty of. By this means he indeed sped better than he expected. Aires, Desborough, Berry, Evanson and the rest of that troop did prove so valiant that, as far as I could learn, they never once ran away before an enemy. Hereupon he got a commission to take some care of the associated counties, where he brought this troop into a double regiment of fourteen full troops, and all these as full of religious men as he could get. These, having more than ordinary wit and resolution, had more than ordinary success, first in Lincolnshire and afterward in the Earl of Manchester's army at York fight. With their successes the hearts both of captain and soldiers secretly rise both in pride and expectation; and the familiarity of many honest erroneous men (Anabaptists, Antinomians, etc.) withal began quickly to corrupt their judgments. Hereupon Cromwell's general religious zeal giveth way to the power of that ambition, which still increaseth as his successes do increase. Both piety and ambition concurred in his countenancing of all that he thought godly, of what sect soever. Piety pleadeth for them as godly, and charity as men; and ambition secretly telleth him what use he might make of them. He meaneth well in all this at the beginning, and thinketh he doth all for the safety of the godly and the public good, but not without an eye to himself.

¹ None would be so whole-heartedly valiant in battle as religious people.

² = debauched.

When successes had broken down all considerable opposition he was then in the face of his strongest temptations, which conquered him when he had conquered others. He thought that he had hitherto done well, both as to the end and means, and God, by the wonderful blessing of his providence, had owned his endeavours, and it was none but God that had made him great. He thought that if the war was lawful the victory was lawful; and if it were lawful to fight against the king and conquer him, it was lawful to use him as a conquered enemy, and a foolish thing to trust him when they had so provoked him (whereas, indeed, the parliament professed neither to fight against him nor to conquer him). He thought that the heart of the king was deep, and that he resolved upon revenge, and that if he were king he would easily at one time or other accomplish it; and that it was a dishonest thing of the parliament to set men to fight for them against the king, and then to lay their necks upon the block and be at his mercy; and that if that must be their case it was better to flatter or please him than to fight against him. He saw that the Scots and the Presbyterians in parliament did, by the Covenant and the Oath of Allegiance, find themselves bound to the person and family of the king, and that there was no hope of changing their minds in this. Hereupon he joined with that party in the parliament who were for the cutting off the king and trusting him no more. And consequently he joined with them in raising the Independents to make a fraction¹ in the Synod at Westminster and in the city, and in strengthening the sectaries in army, city and country, and in rendering the Scots and ministers as odious as he could, to disable them from hindering the change of government. In the doing of all this (which distrust and ambition had persuaded him was well done) he thought it lawful to use his wits, to choose each instrument and suit each means unto its end; and accordingly he daily employed himself, and modelled the army, and disbanded all other garrisons and forces and committees which were like to have hindered his design. And as he went on, though he yet resolved not what form the New Commonwealth should be moulded into, yet he thought it but reasonable that he should be the chief

¹ ? faction.

person who had been chief in their deliverance (for the Lord Fairfax, he knew, had but the name). At last, as he thought it lawful to cut off the king because he thought he was lawfully conquered, so he thought it lawful to fight against the Scots that would set him up and pull down the Presbyterian majority in the parliament, which would else, by restoring him, undo all which had cost them so much blood and treasure. And accordingly he conquereth Scotland, and pulleth down the parliament, being the easilier persuaded that all this was lawful because he had a secret bias and eye towards his own exaltation. For he (and his officers) thought that when the king was gone a government there must be, and that no man was so fit for it as he himself, as best *deserving* it, and as having by his wit and great interest in the army the best sufficiency to manage it. Yea, they thought that *God had called* them by successes to govern and take care of the Commonwealth and of the interest of all his people in the land; and that if they stood by and suffered the parliament to do that which they thought was dangerous, it would be required at their hands, whom they thought God had made the guardians of the land.

Having thus forced his conscience to justify all his cause (the cutting off the king, the setting up himself and his adherents, the pulling down the parliament and the Scots), he thinketh that the end being good and necessary, the necessary means cannot be bad. And accordingly he giveth his interest and cause leave to tell him how far sects shall be tolerated and commended, and how far not; and how far the ministry shall be owned and supported and how far not; yea, and how far professions, promises and vows shall be kept or broken; and therefore the Covenant he could not away with, nor the ministers, further than they yielded to his ends or did not openly resist them. He seemed exceeding open-hearted, by a familiar rustic-affected carriage (especially to his soldiers in sporting with them); but he thought secrecy a virtue and dissimulation no vice, and simulation—that is, in plain English, a lie—or perfidiousness to be a tolerable fault in a case of necessity; being of the same opinion with the Lord Bacon (who was not so precise as learned) that “the best composition and temperature is to have openness

in fame and opinion, secrecy in habit, dissimulation in seasonable use, and a power to feign if there be no remedy" (Essay vi. p. 31). Therefore he kept fair with all, saving his open or unreconcilable enemies. He carried it with such dissimulation that Anabaptists, Independents and Antinomians did all think that he was one of them. But he never endeavoured to persuade the Presbyterians that he was one of them, but only that he would do them justice and preserve them, and that he honoured their worth and piety; for he knew that they were not so easily deceived. In a word, he did as our prelates have done, begin low and rise higher in his resolutions as his condition rose, and the promises which he made in his lower condition he used as the interest of his higher following condition did require, and kept up as much honesty and godliness in the main as his cause and interest would allow (but there they left him). And his name standeth as a monitory monument or pillar to posterity. . .

Cromwell being dead, his son Richard, by his will and testament and the army, was quietly settled in his place; while all men looked that they should presently have fallen into confusion and discord among themselves; the counties, cities and corporations of England send up their congratulations to own him as Protector (but none of us in Worcestershire, save the Independents, meddled in it).

He interred his father with great pomp and solemnity. He called a parliament, and that without any such restraints as his father had used. The members took the Oath of fidelity or allegiance to him at the door of the House before they entered. And all men wondered to see all so quiet in so dangerous a time. . . .

The army set up Richard Cromwell, it seemeth, upon trial, resolving to use him as he behaved himself; and though they swore fidelity to him, they meant to keep it no longer than he pleased them. And when they saw that he began to favour the sober people of the land, to honour parliaments, and to respect the ministers whom they called Presbyterians, they presently resolved to make him know his masters, and that it was *they*, and not *he*, that were called by God to be the chief protectors of the interest of the nation. He was not so formidable to them as his father was, and therefore everyone boldly spurned at him. . . .

But if they would venture for their parts on new confusions, he would venture his part by retiring to his privacy. And so he did (to satisfy these proud distracted tyrants, who thought they did but pull down tyranny) resign the government by a writing under his hand, and retired himself, and left them to govern as they pleased. . . .

I make no doubt but God permitted all this for good; and that as it was their treason to set up Oliver and destroy the king, so it was their duty to have set up the present king instead of Richard. And God made them the means to their own destruction, contrary to their intentions, to restore the monarchy and family which they had ruined. . . .

The poor Church of Christ, the sober, sound religious part, are like Christ that was crucified between two malefactors; the profane and formal persecutors on one hand, and the fanatic dividing sectary on the other hand, have in all ages been grinding the spiritual seed as the corn is ground between the millstones. . . Yet there are few of them that lament their sin, but justify themselves and their misdoings, and the *penitent malefactor* is yet unknown to us. . . .

O! what may not *pride* do? and what miscarriages will not false principles and faction hide? One would think that if their opinions had been certainly *true*, and their Church Orders *good*, yet the interest of Christ, and the souls of men, and of greater truths should have been so regarded by the dividers in England as that the safety of all these should have been preferred, and not all ruined rather than their way should want its carnal arm and liberty; and that they should not tear the garment of Christ all to pieces rather than it should want their lace.

And it must be acknowledged, also impartially, that some of the Presbyterian ministers frightened the sectaries into this fury by the unpeaceableness and impatience of their minds. They ran from libertinism into the other extreme, and were so little sensible of their own infirmity that they would not have those tolerated who were not only tolerable, but worthy instruments and members in the churches. The reconcilers that were ruled by *prudent charity* always called out to both the parties that the churches must be united upon the terms of primitive

simplicity, and that we must have *unity in things necessary and liberty in things unnecessary, and charity in all*. But they could never be heard, but were taken for adversaries to the government of the Church, as they are by the prelates at this day. Nay, when in Worcestershire we did but agree to practise so much as all parties were agreed in, they said we did but thereby set up another party. . . .

When the army had brought themselves and the nation into utter confusion, and had set up and pulled down Richard Cromwell, . Sir George Booth and Sir Thomas Middleton raised forces in Cheshire and North Wales (but the Cavaliers that should have joined with them failed them almost all over the land; a few rose in some places, but were quickly ruined and came to nothing). Lambert quickly routed those in Cheshire; Sir Arthur Haselrigge with Colonel Morley get into Portsmouth, which is possessed as for the Rump. Monk declareth against them in Scotland, purgeth his army of the Anabaptists, and marcheth into England. The Rump party, with Haselrigge, divided the army at home, and so disabled them to oppose Monk, who marcheth on, and all are afraid of him; and while he declareth himself against monarchy for a Commonwealth, he tieth the hands of his enemies by a lie and uniteth with the city of London, and bringeth on again the old ejected members of the parliament, and so bringeth in the king. Sir William Morrice (his kinsman) and Mr. Clarges were his great advisers. The Earl of Manchester, Mr. Calamy and other Presbyterians encouraged and persuaded him to bring in the king. At first he joined with the Rump against the citizens, and pulled down the city gates to master them; but at last Sir Thomas Allen, then Lord Mayor (by the persuasion of Dr. Jacomb and some other Presbyterian ministers and citizens, as he hath oft told me himself), invited Monk into the city, and drew him to agree and join with them against the Rump (as they then called the relicts of the parliament). And this in truth was the act that turned the scales and brought in the king. Whether the same men expected to be used as they have since been, themselves, I know not. If they did, their self-denial was very great who were content to be silenced and laid in gaols so they might but bring in the king. After this the old

excluded members of the parliament meet with Monk. He calleth them to sit, that the king might come in both by him and by them. He agreeth with them to sit but a few days and then dissolve themselves and call another parliament. They consented, and prepared for the king's restoration, and appointed a Council of State and dissolved themselves. Another parliament is chosen, which calleth in the king. . . And when the king came in, Colonel Birch and Mr. Prynne were appointed to disband the army, the several regiments receiving their pay in several places, and none of them daring to disobey; no, not Monk's own regiments who brought in the king.

Thus did God do a more wonderful work in the dissolving of this army than any of their greatest victories was which set them up. That an army that had conquered three such kingdoms and brought so many armies to destruction, cut off the king, pulled down the parliament and set up and pulled down others at their pleasure; that had conquered so many cities and castles; that were so *united* by principles and interest and guilt, and so deeply engaged, as much as their estates, and honour, and lives came to, to have stood it out to the very utmost; that had professed so much of their wisdom and religiousness, and had declared such high resolutions against monarchy—I say that such an army should have one commander among themselves, whom they accounted not religious, that should march against them without resistance, and that they should all stand still and let him come on and restore the parliament and bring in the king, and disband themselves, and all this without one bloody nose! . . . let any man that hath the use of his understanding judge whether this were not enough to prove that there is a God that governeth the world and disposeth of the Powers of the world according to his Will!

For my own actions and condition all this time, I have partly showed them in the Second Part; how I was called up to London and what I did there, and with how little success I there continued my pacificatory endeavours. When I had lived there a few weeks I fell into another fit of bleeding. . . Being restored by the mercy of God and the help of Dr. Bates (and the moss of a dead man's skull which I had from Dr. Micklethwaite), I went to Mr. Thomas

Foley's house, where I lived (in Austinfriars) about a year; and thence to Dr. Micklethwaite's house in Little Britain, where I tabled about another year; and thence to Moorfields, and thence to Acton, from which, being at the present driven by the plague, I wait for the further disposal of my almighty and most gracious Lord. . . .

CHAPTER IX

CONCERNING SOME OF HIS BOOKS

"The Saints' Everlasting Rest"—Catholicism against all sects—A strange Quaker-silence—The Countess of Balcarres and Argyle.

THE first book that ever I published is a small one, called *Aphorisms of Justification and the Covenants*, etc. I had first begun my book, called *The Saints' Rest*, and coming in it to answer the question how, in Matthew xxv., the reward is adjudged to men on the account of their good works, the chief propositions of that book did suddenly offer themselves to me in order to that resolution. But I was prepared with much disputing against Antinomianism in the army. At Sir Thomas Rous's house, in my weakness, I wrote most of that book, and finished it when I came to Kidderminster. . . .

The second book which I wrote (and the first which I began) was that called *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*. Whilst I was in health I had not the least thought of writing books, or of serving God in any more public way than preaching. But when I was weakened with great bleeding, and left solitary in my chamber at Sir John Cook's in Derbyshire, without any acquaintance but my servant about me, and was sentenced to death by the physicians, I began to contemplate more seriously on the everlasting rest which I apprehended myself to be just on the borders of. And that my thoughts might not too much scatter in my meditation I began to write something on that subject, intending but the quantity of a sermon or two (which is the cause that the beginning is in brevity and style disproportionable to the rest); but being continued long in weakness, where I had no books nor no better employment, I followed it on till it was enlarged to the bulk in which it is published. The first three weeks I spent in it was at Mr. Nowel's house at Kirkby Mallory in Leicestershire; a quarter of a year more, at the seasons which so great weakness would allow, I bestowed on it at Sir Thomas Rous's house at Rous Lench in Worcestershire; and I

finished it shortly after at Kidderminster. The first and last parts were first done, being all that I intended for my own use; and the second and third parts came afterwards in besides my first intention.

This book it pleased God so far to bless to the profit of many that it encouraged me to be guilty of all those scripts which after followed. The marginal citations I put in after I came home to my books; but almost all the book itself was written when I had no book but a Bible and a Concordance. And I found that the transcript of the heart hath the greatest force on the hearts of others. For the good that I have heard that multitudes have received by that writing, and the benefit which I have again received by their prayers, I here humbly return my thanks to him that compelled me to write it. . . .

I had preached a sermon at Worcester which (though rude and not polished) I thought meet to print, under the title of *The True Catholic and The Catholic Church Described*. It is for Catholicism against all sects; to show the sin and folly and mischief of all sects that would appropriate the Church to themselves, and trouble the world with the question, Which of all these parties is the Church? as if they knew not that the Catholic Church is *that whole* which containeth all the parts, though some more pure and some less; especially it is suited against the Romish claim, which damneth all Christians besides themselves; and it detecteth and confuteth dividing principles. For I apprehended it a matter of great necessity to imprint true Catholicism on the minds of Christians, it being a most lamentable thing to observe how few Christians in the world there be that fall not into one sect or other, and wrong not the common interest of Christianity for the promoting of the interest of their sect; and how lamentably love is thereby destroyed, so that most men think not that they are bound to love those, as the members of Christ, which are against their party, and the leaders of most sects do not stick to persecute those that differ from them, and think the blood of those who hinder their opinions and parties to be an acceptable sacrifice to God. And if they can but get to be of a sect which they think the *holiest* (as the Anabaptists and Separatists), or which is the *largest* (as the Greeks and Papists), they think

then that they are sufficiently warranted to deny others to be God's Church, or at least to deny them Christian love and communion. . .

When we set on foot our Association in Worcestershire I was desired to print our agreement, with an explication of the several articles, which I did in a small book called *Christian Concord*, in which I gave the reasons why the Episcopal, Presbyterians and Independents might and should unite on such terms, without any change of any of their principles. But I confess that the new Episcopal party that follow Grotius too far and deny the very being of all ministers and churches that have not diocesan bishops are not capable of union with the rest on such terms. . . .

Also I published . *A Call to the Unconverted*, etc. The occasion of this was my converse with Bishop Usher while I was at London, who . was importunate with me to write directions suited to the various states of Christians, and also against particular sins. I revered the man, but disregarded these persuasions, supposing I could do nothing but what is done as well or better already. But when he was dead his words went deeper to my mind, and I purposed to obey his counsel; yet so as that to the first sort of men (the ungodly) I thought vehement persuasions meetier than directions only. And so for such I published this little book, which God hath blessed with unexpected success beyond all the rest that I have written (except *The Saints' Rest*). In a little more than a year there were about twenty thousand of them printed by my own consent, and about ten thousand since, besides many thousands by stolen impressions, which poor men stole for lucre's sake. Through God's mercy I have had information of almost whole households converted by this small book, which I set so light by. And as if all this in England, Scotland and Ireland were not mercy enough to me, God (since I was silenced) hath sent it over on his message to many beyond the seas; for when Mr. Eliot had printed all the Bible in the Indians' language, he next translated this my *Call to the Unconverted*, as he wrote to us here. . . .

About that time, being apprehensive how great a part of our work lay in catechising the aged who were ignorant, as well as children, and especially in serious conference

with them about the matters of their salvation, I thought it best to draw in all the ministers of the country¹ with me, that the benefit might extend the farther, and that each one might have the less opposition. . .

When we set upon this great work it was thought best to begin with a day of fasting and prayer by all the ministers at Worcester, where they desired me to preach. But weakness and other things hindered me from that day; but to compensate that I enlarged and published the sermon which I had prepared for them, and entitled the treatise *Gildas Salvianus* (because I imitated Gildas and Salvianus in my liberty of speech to the pastors of the churches), or *The Reformed Pastor*. . . If God would but reform the ministry, and set them on their duties zealously and faithfully, the people would certainly be reformed. All churches either rise or fall as the ministry doth rise or fall (not in riches and worldly grandeur), but in knowledge, zeal and ability for their work. . . .

The Quakers began to make a great stir among us, and acted the parts of men in raptures, and spake in the manner of men inspired, and everywhere railed against tithes and ministers. They sent many papers of queries to divers ministers about us; and to one of the chief of them I wrote an answer and gave them as many more questions to answer, entitling it *The Quakers' Catechism*. These pamphlets being but one or two days' work, were no great interruption to my better labours, and as they were of small worth, so also of small cost. The same ministers of our country¹ that are now silenced are they that the Quakers most vehemently opposed, meddling little with the rest. The marvellous concurrence of instruments telleth us that one principal agent doth act them all. I have oft asked the Quakers lately why they chose the same ministers to revile whom all the drunkards and swearers rail against. And why they cried out in our assemblies, "Come down, thou deceiver, thou hireling, thou dog"; and now never meddle with the pastors or congregations. And they answer: (1) That these men sin in the open light and need none to discover them; (2) That the Spirit hath his times both of severity and of lenity. But the truth is, they knew then they might be bold without any fear of suffering by it. And now it

¹ = county.

is time for them to save their skins; they suffer enough for their own assemblies. . .

About the same time I fell into troublesome acquaintance with one Clement Writer of Worcester, an ancient man that had long seemed a forward professor of religiousness and of a good conversation, but was now perverted to I know not what. . . His assertion to me was that no man is bound to believe in Christ that doth not see confirming miracles himself with his own eyes.

By the provocations of this apostate I wrote a book called *The Unreasonableness of Infidelity*, consisting of four parts. . . .

Being greatly apprehensive of the commonness and danger of the sin of selfishness as the sum and root of all positive evil, I preached many sermons against it; and at the request of some friends I published them, entitled *A Treatise of Self-denial*, which found better acceptance than most of my other, but yet prevented not the ruin of Church and State and millions of souls by that sin.

After that I published *Five Disputations about Church Government*, in order to the reconciliation of the differing parties. In the first I proved that the English diocesan prelacy is intolerable (which none hath answered). In the second I have proved the validity of the ordination then exercised without diocesans in England (which no man hath answered, though many have urged men to be re-ordained). In the third I proved that there are divers sorts of Episcopacy lawful and desirable. In the fourth and fifth I showed the lawfulness of some ceremonies and of a liturgy, and what is unlawful here.

This book being published when bishops, liturgy and ceremonies were most decried and opposed, was of good use to declare my judgment when the king came in; for if I had said as much then I had been judged but a temporiser. But as it was effectual to settle many in a moderation, so it made abundance of Conformists afterwards (or was pretended at least to give them satisfaction); though it never meddled with the greatest parts of Conformity (renouncing vows, assent and consent to all things in three books, etc.), and though it unanswerably confuted our prelacy and re-ordination and consequently the renunciation of the vow against prelacy, and opposed

the cross in baptism. But *sic vitant stulti vitia* (as my *Aphorisms* made some Arminians). If you discover an error to an injudicious man he reeleth into the contrary error, and it is hard to stop him in the middle verity.

At the same time I published another book against Popery, fit for the defensive part, and instructing Protestants how to answer any Papist. It is entituled *A Key for Catholics, to open the juggling of the Jesuits and satisfy all that are but truly willing to understand whether the Cause of the Roman or Reformed Churches be of God.*

In this treatise, proving that the blood of the king is not by Papists to be charged upon Protestants, I plainly hazarded my life against the powers that then were, and grievously incensed Sir H. Vane. . . But the great indignation against this book and the former is that they were by epistles directed to Ri. Cromwell as Lord Protector, which I did only to provoke him that had power, to use it well, when the parliament had sworn fidelity to him; and that without any word of approbation to his title. . . .

Having been desired in the time of our Associations to draw up those terms which all Christian churches may hold communion upon, I published them, though too late for any such use (till God give men better minds), that the world might see what our religion and our terms of communion were, and that if after ages prove more peaceable they may have some light from those that went before them. . . .

This small book is called by the name of *Universal Concord.* . .

The next published was a sermon before the parliament the day before they voted in the king, being a day of humiliation appointed to that end. It is called *A Sermon of Repentance.* .

The next published was a sermon preached before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen at Paul's, being on their day of rejoicing for General Monk's success to bring in the king. It is called *A Sermon of Right Rejoicing.*

The next was a sermon of the *Life of Faith*, preached before the king, being all that ever I was called to preach before him when I had been sworn his chaplain-in-ordinary, of which more afterward. . . .

A treatise of self-knowledge preached at Dunstan's

West, called *The Mischiefs of Self-ignorance and Benefits of Self-acquaintance*, which was published partly to vindicate it from many false accusations, and partly at the desire of the Countess of Balcarres, to whom it was directed. . . .

The next was a treatise called *The Divine Life*, which containeth three parts: the first is of the right knowledge of God, for the imprinting of his image on the soul by the knowledge of his attributes, etc.; the second is of walking with God; the third is of improving solitude to converse with God when we are forsaken by all friends or separated from them.

The occasion of the publishing of this treatise was this: the Countess of Balcarres being going into Scotland after her abode in England, being deeply sensible of the loss of the company of those friends which she left behind her, desired me to preach the last sermon which she was to hear from me on those words of Christ, John xvi. 32, "Behold the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me". . . .

Because I have said so much in the epistles of these two books of the Countess of Balcarres, the reader may expect some further satisfaction of her quality, and the cause.

She is daughter to the late Earl of Seaforth in Scotland, towards the Highlands, and was married to the Earl of Balcarres, a Covenanter, but an enemy to Cromwell's perfidiousness and true to the person and authority of the king. With the Earl of Glencarne he kept up the last war for the king against Cromwell; and his lady, through dearness of affection, marched with him and lay out-of-doors with him on the mountains. At last Cromwell drove them out of Scotland, and they went together beyond sea to the king, where they long followed the court, and he was taken for the head of the Presbyterians with the king, and by evil instruments fell out with the Lord Chancellor, who prevailing against him upon some advantage, he was for a time forbidden the court; the grief whereof, added to the distempers he had contracted by his warfare on the cold and hungry mountains, cast him into a consumption, of which he died. He was a lord of excellent learning,

judgment and honesty, none being praised equally with him for learning and understanding in all Scotland.

When the Earl of Lauderdale (his near kinsman and great friend) was prisoner in Portsmouth and Windsor Castle he fell into acquaintance with my books, and so valued them that he read them all and took notes of them, and earnestly commended them to the Earl of Balcarres (with the king). The Earl of Balcarres met at the first sight with some passages where he thought I spoke too favourably of the Papists and differed from many other Protestants, and so cast them by and sent the reason of his distaste to the Earl of Lauderdale, who pressed him but to read one of the books over, which he did; and so read them all (as I have seen many of them marked with his hand), and was drawn to overvalue them more than the Earl of Lauderdale.

Hereupon his lady reading them also, and being a woman of very strong love and friendship, with extraordinary entireness swallowed up in her husband's love, for the books' sake and her husband's sake she became a most affectionate friend to me before she ever saw me. While she was in France, being zealous for the king's restoration (for whose cause her husband had pawned and ruined his estate), by the Earl of Lauderdale's direction she, with Sir Robert Murray, got divers letters from the pastors and others there to bear witness of the king's sincerity in the Protestant religion (among which there is one to me from Mr. Gaches). Her great wisdom, modesty, piety and sincerity made her accounted the saint at the court. When she came over with the king, her extraordinary respects obliged me to be so often with her as gave me acquaintance with her eminency in all the foresaid virtues. She is of solid understanding in religion, for her sex, and of prudence much more than ordinary; and of great integrity and constancy in her religion, and a great hater of hypocrisy, and faithful to Christ in an unfaithful world; and she is somewhat overmuch affectionate to her friend, which hath cost her a great deal of sorrow, in the loss of her husband,¹ and since of other special friends, and may cost her more when the rest forsake her, as many in prosperity use to do those that will not forsake their fidelity to Christ.

¹ She is since married to the Earl of Argyle (*marg.*).

Her eldest son, the young Earl of Balcarres, a very hopeful youth, died of a strange disease, two stones being found in his heart, of which one was very great. Being my constant auditor and over-respectful friend, I had occasion for the just praises and acknowledgments which I have given her, which the occasioning of these books hath caused me to mention. . . .

And concerning almost all my writings I must confess that my own judgment is that fewer well studied and polished had been better; but the reader who can safely censure the books is not fit to censure the author unless he had been upon the place and acquainted with all the occasions and circumstances. Indeed, for *The Saints' Rest* I had four months' vacancy to write it (but in the midst of continual languishing and medicine). But for the rest, I wrote them in the crowd of all my other employments, which would allow me no great leisure for polishing and exactness, or any ornament; so that I scarce ever wrote one sheet twice over, nor stayed to make any blots or interlinings, but was fain to let it go as it was first conceived. And when my own desire was rather to stay upon one thing long than run over many, some sudden occasions or other extorted almost all my writings from me; and the apprehensions of *present usefulness* or *necessity* prevailed against all other motives. . . . But even to a foreseeing man, who knoweth what will be of longest use, it is hard to discern how far that which is *presently needful* may be omitted for the sake of a greater future good. There are some other works, wherein my heart hath more been set than any of those forementioned, in which I have met with great obstructions. For I must declare that in this as in many other matters I have found that we are not the choosers of our own employments, no more than of our own successes.

CHAPTER X

RICHARD BAXTER'S SELF-ANALYSIS AND LIFE-REVIEW

*Experiences of his soul—The mellowing influences of age—
Good and bad causes of change—Crow's-nest controversies
—Degrees of certainty—Sees more good and more evil
in all men—Grief for divisions of Christians.*

BECAUSE it is soul-experiments which those that urge me to this kind of writing do expect that I should especially communicate to others, and I have said little of God's dealing with my soul since the time of my younger years, I shall only give the reader so much satisfaction as to acquaint him truly what change God hath made upon my mind and heart since those unriper times, and wherein I now differ in judgment and disposition from myself. And for any more particular account of heart-occurrences, and God's operations on me, I think it somewhat unsavoury to recite them, seeing God's dealings are much what¹ the same with all his servants in the main, and the points wherein he varieth are usually so small that I think not such fit to be repeated. Nor have I anything extraordinary to glory in which is not common to the rest of my brethren, who have the same spirit and are servants of the same Lord. And the true reason why I do adventure so far upon the censure of the world as to tell them wherein the case is altered with me, is that I may take off young unexperienced Christians from being over-confident in their first apprehensions, or overvaluing their first degrees of grace, or too much applauding and following unfurnished, unexperienced men, but may somewhat be directed what mind and course of life to prefer, by the judgment of one that hath tried both before them.

I. The temper of my mind hath somewhat altered with the temper of my body. When I was young I was more vigorous, affectionate and fervent in preaching, conference and prayer, than (ordinarily) I can be now. My style was more extemporate and lax, but by the advantage of affection, and a very familiar moving voice and utterance, my preaching then did more affect the auditory than many

¹ = muchwhat: cp. somewhat.

of the last years before I gave over preaching; but yet what I delivered was much more raw, and had more passages that would not bear the trial of accurate judgments; and my discourses had both less substance and less judgment than of late.

2. My understanding was then *quicker*, and could easilier manage anything that was newly presented to it upon a sudden; but it is since better *furnished* and acquainted with the ways of truth and error, and with a multitude of particular mistakes of the world, which then I was the more in danger of because I had only the *faculty* of knowing them, but did not *actually* know them. I was then like a man of a quick understanding that was to travel a way which he never went before, or to cast up an account which he never laboured in before, or to play on an instrument of music which he never saw before. And I am now like one of somewhat a slower understanding (by that *præmatura senectus* which weakness and excessive bleedings brought me to) who is travelling a way which he hath often gone, and is casting up an account which he hath often cast up and hath ready at hand, and that is playing on an instrument which he hath often played on. So that I can very confidently say that my judgment is much sounder and firmer now than it was; for though I am not ¹ as competent judge of the *actings* of my own understanding then, yet I can judge of the *effects*. And when I peruse the writings which I wrote in my younger years I can find the footsteps of my unfurnished mind, and of my emptiness and insufficiency. So that the man that followed my judgment then was liker to have been misled by me than he that should follow it now.

And yet, that I may not say worse than it deserveth of my former measure of understanding, I shall truly tell you what change I find now in the perusal of my own writings. Those points which then I *thoroughly studied*, my judgment is the same of *now* as it was *then*; and therefore in the *substance* of my religion, and in those controversies which I then searched into with some extraordinary diligence, I find not my mind disposed to a change. But in divers points that I studied slightly and by the halves, and in many things which I took upon trust from others,

¹ Folio reads "now."

I have found since that my apprehensions were either erroneous or very lame. And those things which I was orthodox in, I had either insufficient reasons for or a mixture of some sound and some insufficient ones, or else an insufficient apprehension of those reasons; so that I scarcely knew what I seemed to know. And though in my writings I found little in substance which my present judgment differeth from, yet in my *Aphorisms* and *Saints' Rest* (which were my first writings) I find some raw unmeet expressions; and one common infirmity I perceive, that I put off matters with some kind of confidence, as if I had done something new or more than ordinary in them, when upon my more mature reviews I find that I said not half that which the subject did require. As, e.g., in the doctrine of the covenants and of justification, but especially about the divine authority of the Scripture in the second part of *The Saints' Rest*, where I have not said half that should have been said; and the reason was because that I had not read any of the fuller sort of books that are written on those subjects, nor conversed with those that knew more than myself, and so all those things were either new or great to me which were common and small perhaps to others; and because they all came in by the way of my own study of the naked matter, and not from books, they were apt to affect my mind the more, and to seem greater than they were. And this token of my weakness accompanied those my younger studies, that I was very apt to start up controversies in the way of my practical writings, and also more desirous to acquaint the world with all that I took to be the truth, and to assault those books by name which I thought did tend to deceive them, and did contain unsound and dangerous doctrine. And the reason of all this was that I was then in the vigour of my youthful apprehensions, and the new appearance of any sacred truth was more apt to affect me, and be higher valued, than afterward, when commonness had dulled my delight; and I did not sufficiently discern then how much in most of our controversies is verbal and upon mutual mistakes. And withal I knew not how impatient divines were of being contradicted, nor how it would stir up all their powers to defend what they have once said, and to rise up against the truth which is thus thrust upon them

as the mortal enemy of their honour. And I knew not how hardly men's minds are changed from their former apprehensions, be the evidence never so plain. And I have perceived that nothing so much hindereth the reception of the truth as urging it on men with too harsh importunity, and falling too heavily on their errors. For hereby you engage their honour in the business, and they defend their errors as themselves, and stir up all their wit and ability to oppose you. In controversies it is fierce opposition which is the bellows to kindle a resisting zeal; when, if they be neglected and their opinions lie a while despised, they usually cool and come again to themselves (though I know that this holdeth not when the greediness and increase of his followers doth animate a sectary, even though he have no opposition). Men are so loth to be drenched with the truth that I am no more for going that way to work; and, to confess the truth, I am lately much prone to the *contrary extreme*, to be too indifferent what men hold and to keep my judgment to myself, and never to mention anything wherein I differ from another, or anything which I think I know more than he; or at least, if he receive it not presently,¹ to silence it, and leave him to his own opinion. And I find this effect is mixed according to its causes, which are some *good* and some *bad*. The bad causes are: (1) An impatience of men's weakness and mistaking frowardness and self-conceitedness; (2) An abatement of my *sensible* esteem of *truth*, through the long abode of them on my mind. Though my judgment value them, yet it is hard to be equally *affected* with old and common things as with *new* and *rare* ones. The better causes are: (1) That I am much more sensible than ever of the necessity of living upon the principles of religion which we are all agreed in, and uniting these; and how much mischief men that overvalue their own opinions have done by their *controversies* in the Church; how some have destroyed charity, and some caused schisms by them, and most have hindered godliness in themselves and others, and used them to divert men from the serious prosecuting of a holy life; and as Sir Francis Bacon saith (in his *Essay of Peace*), that it's one great benefit of church-peace and concord that writing controversies is turned into books

¹ = immediately.

of practical devotion for increase of piety and virtue. (2) And I find that it's much more for most men's good and edification to converse with them only in that way of godliness which all are agreed in, and not by touching upon differences to stir up their corruptions, and to tell them of little more of your knowledge than what you find them willing to receive from you as mere learners; and therefore to stay till they *crave* information of you (as Musculus did with the Anabaptists when he visited them in prison and conversed kindly and lovingly with them, and showed them all the love he could, and never talked to them of their opinions, till at last they who were wont to call him a deceiver and false prophet did intreat him to instruct them, and received his instructions). ~~We mistake men's diseases when we think there needeth nothing to cure their errors but only to bring them the evidence of truth. Alas! there are many distempers of mind to be removed before men are apt to receive that evidence. And therefore that church is happy where order is kept up and the abilities of the ministers command a reverend submission from the hearers, and where all are in Christ's school in the distinct ranks of teachers and learners. For in a learning way men are ready to receive the truth, but in a disputing way they come armed against it with prejudice and animosity.~~

3. And I must say further that what I last mentioned on the by is one of the notablest changes of my mind. In my youth I was quickly past my fundamentals and was running up into a multitude of controversies, and greatly delighted with metaphysical and scholastic writings (though I must needs say my preaching was still on the necessary points). But the elder I grew the smaller stress I laid upon these controversies and curiosities (though still my intellect abhorreth confusion), as finding far greater uncertainties in them than I at first discerned and finding less usefulness comparatively, even where there is the greatest certainty. And now it is the fundamental doctrines of the Catechism which I highest value and daily think of, and find most useful to myself and others. The Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments do find me now the most acceptable and plentiful matter for all my meditations. They are to me as my daily bread

and drink. And as I can speak and write of them over and over again, so I had rather read or hear of them than of any of the school niceties which once so much pleased me. And thus I observed it was with old Bishop Usher and with many other men. And I conjecture that this effect also is mixed of good and bad according to its causes.

The bad cause may perhaps be some natural infirmity and decay. And as trees in the spring shoot up into branches, leaves and blossoms, but in the autumn the life draws down into the root, so possibly my nature, conscious of its infirmity and decay, may find itself insufficient for numerous particles and assurgency to the attempting of difficult things; and so my mind may retire to the root of Christian principles; and also I have often been afraid lest ill-rooting at first, and many temptations afterwards, have made it more necessary for me than many others to retire to the root and secure my fundamentals. But upon much observation I am afraid lest most others are in no better a case, and that at the first they take it for a granted thing that Christ is the Saviour of the world and that the soul is immortal, and that there is a heaven and a hell, etc., while they are studying abundance of scholastic superstructures, and at last will find cause to study more soundly their religion itself as well as I have done.

The better causes are these: (1) I value all things according to their use and ends, and I find in the daily practice and experience of my soul that the knowledge of God and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and the truth of Scripture, and the life to come, and of a holy life, is of more use to me than all the most curious speculations; (2) I know that every man must grow (as trees do) downwards and upwards both at once, and that the roots increase as the bulk and branches do; (3) Being nearer death and another world, I am the more regardful of those things which my everlasting life or death depends on; (4) Having most to do with ignorant miserable people I am commanded by my charity and reason to treat with them of that which their salvation lieth on, and not to dispute with them of formalities and niceties when the question is presently to be determined whether they shall dwell for ever in heaven or in hell. In a word, my meditations must be most upon the matters of my practice and my interest. And as the

love of God and the seeking of everlasting life is the matter of my practice and my interest, so must it be of my meditation. That is the best doctrine and study which maketh men better and tendeth to make them happy. I abhor the folly of those unlearned persons who revile or despise learning because they know not what it is, and I take not any piece of true learning to be useless; and yet my soul approveth of the resolution of holy Paul, who determined to know nothing among his hearers (that is, comparatively to value and make ostentation of no other wisdom) but (the knowledge of) a crucified Christ; to know God in Christ is life eternal. As the stock of the tree affordeth timber to build houses and cities, when the small though higher multifarious branches are but to make a crow's nest or a blaze, so the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, of heaven and holiness, doth build up the soul to endless blessedness, and affordeth it solid peace and comfort when a multitude of school niceties serve but for vain janglings and hurtful diversions and contentions. And yet I would not dissuade my reader from the perusal of Aquinas, Scotus, Ockam, Arminiensis, Durandus or any such writer, for much good may be gotten from them; but I would persuade him to study and live upon the essential doctrines of Christianity and godliness incomparably above them all. And that he may know that my testimony is somewhat regardable, I presume to say that in this I as much gainsay my natural inclination to subtlety and accurateness in knowing, as he is like to do by his if he obey my counsel. And I think if he lived among infidels and enemies of Christ he would find that to make good the doctrine of faith and of life eternal were not only his noblest and most useful study, but also that which would require the height of all his parts and the utmost of his diligence to manage it skilfully to the satisfaction of himself and others.

4. I add, therefore, that this is another thing which I am changed in: that whereas in my younger days I never was tempted to doubt of the truth of Scripture or Christianity, but all my doubts and fears were exercised at home about my own sincerity and interest in Christ, and this was it which I called unbelief; since then my sorest assaults have been on the other side, and such they were that, had I

been void of internal experience and the adhesion of love, and the special help of God, and had not discerned more reason for my religion than I did when I was younger, I had certainly apostatised to infidelity (though for atheism or ungodliness my reason seeth no stronger arguments than may be brought to prove that there is no earth or air or sun). I am now, therefore, much more apprehensive than heretofore of the necessity of well grounding men in their religion, and especially of the witness of the indwelling Spirit; for I more sensibly perceive that the Spirit is the great witness of Christ and Christianity to the world. And though the folly of fanatics tempted me long to overlook the strength of this testimony of the Spirit, while they placed it in a certain internal assertion or enthusiastic inspiration, yet now I see that the Holy Ghost in another manner is the witness of Christ and his agent in the world. The Spirit in the prophets was his first witness; and the Spirit by miracles was the second; and the Spirit by renovation, sanctification, illumination and consolation, assimilating the soul to Christ and heaven, is the continued witness to all true believers. And if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his (Rom. viii. 9); even as the rational soul in the child is the inherent witness or evidence that he is the child of rational parents. And therefore ungodly persons have a great disadvantage in their resisting temptations to unbelief, and it is no wonder if Christ be a stumbling-block to the Jews, and to the Gentiles foolishness. There is many a one that hideth his temptations to infidelity because he thinketh it a shame to open them, and because it may generate doubts in others; but I doubt the imperfection of most men's care of their salvation, and of their diligence and resolution in a holy life, doth come from the imperfection of their belief of Christianity and the life to come. For my part I must profess that when my belief of things eternal and of the Scripture is most clear and firm all goeth accordingly in my soul, and all temptations to sinful compliances, worldliness or flesh-pleasing do signify worse to me than an invitation to the stocks or Bedlam; and no petition seemeth more necessary to me than "Lord, increase our faith: I believe, help thou my unbelief."

5. Among truths certain in themselves, all are not

equally certain unto me; and even of the mysteries of the Gospel I must needs say with Mr. Richard Hooker, *Eccl. Polit.*, that whatever men may pretend, the subjective certainty cannot go beyond the objective evidence; for it is caused thereby as the print on the wax is caused by that on the seal. Therefore I do more of late than ever discern a necessity of a methodical procedure in maintaining the doctrine of Christianity, and of beginning at natural verities, as presupposed fundamentally to supernatural (though God may when he please reveal all at once, and even natural truths by supernatural revelation). And it is a marvellous great help to my faith to find it built on so sure foundations and so consonant to the law of nature. I am not so foolish as to pretend my certainty to be greater than it is merely because it is a dishonour to be less certain, nor will I by shame be kept from confessing those infirmities which those have as much as I who hypocritically reproach me with them. My certainty that I am a man is before my certainty that there is a God, for *Quod facit notum est magis notum*; my certainty that there is a God is greater than my certainty that he requireth love and holiness of his creature; my certainty of *this* is greater than my certainty of the life of reward and punishment hereafter; my certainty of that is greater than my certainty of the endless duration of it and of the immortality of individuate souls; my certainty of the Deity is greater than my certainty of the Christian Faith; my certainty of the Christian Faith in its essentials is greater than my certainty of the perfection and infallibility of all the Holy Scriptures; my certainty of that is greater than my certainty of the meaning of many particular texts, and so of the truth of many particular doctrines or of the canonicalness of some certain books. So that as you see by what gradations my understanding doth proceed, so also that my certainty differeth as the evidences differ. And they that have attained to greater perfection and a higher degree of certainty than I should pity me and produce their evidence to help me. And they that will begin all their certainty with that of the truth of the Scripture as the *principium cognoscendi* may meet me at the same end; but they must give me leave to undertake to prove to a heathen or infidel the Being of a God, and the necessity of holiness, and

the certainty of a reward or punishment, even while he yet denieth the truth of Scripture and in order to his believing it to be true.

6. In my younger years my trouble for sin was most about my actual failings in thought, word or action (except hardness of heart, of which more anon); but now I am much more troubled for inward defects and omission or want of the vital duties or graces in the soul. My daily trouble is so much for my ignorance of God and weakness of belief, and want of greater love to God, and strangeness to him and to the life to come, and for want of a greater willingness to die, and longing to be with God in heaven, as that I take not some immoralities, though very great, to be in themselves so great and odious sins if they could be found as separate from these. Had I all the riches of the world, how gladly should I give them for a fuller knowledge, belief and love of God and everlasting glory! These wants are the greatest burden of my life, which oft maketh my life itself a burden. And I cannot find any hope of reaching so high in these while I am in the flesh as I once hoped before this time to have attained, which maketh me the wearier of this sinful world, which is honoured with so little of the knowledge of God.

7. Heretofore I placed much of my religion in tenderness of heart, and grieving for sin, and penitential tears; and less of it in the love of God, and studying his love and goodness, and in his joyful praises, than now I do. Then I was little sensible of the greatness and excellency of love and praise, though I coldly spake the same words in its commendations as now I do. And now I am less troubled for want of grief and tears (though I more value humility and refuse not needful humiliation); but my conscience now looketh at love and delight in God, and praising him, as the top of all my religious duties, for which it is that I value and use the rest.

8. My judgment is much more for frequent and serious meditation on the heavenly blessedness than it was heretofore in my younger days. I then thought that a sermon of the attributes of God and the joys of heaven were not the most excellent, and was wont to say, "Everybody knoweth this, that God is great and good, and that heaven is a blessed place; I had rather hear how I may attain it."

And nothing pleased me so well as the doctrine of regeneration and the marks of sincerity, which was because it was suitable to me in that state; but now I had rather read, hear or meditate on God and heaven than on any other subject; for I perceive that it is the object that altereth and elevateth the mind, which will be such as that is which it most frequently feedeth on. And that it is not only useful to our comfort to be much in heaven in our believing thoughts, but that it must animate all our other duties and fortify us against every temptation and sin; and that the love of the end is it that is the poise or spring which setteth every wheel a-going, and must put us on to all the means; and that a man is no more a Christian indeed than he is heavenly.

9. I was once wont to meditate on my own heart, and to dwell all at home, and look little higher; I was still¹ poring either on my sins or wants, or examining my sincerity; but now, though I am greatly convinced of the need of heart-acquaintance and imployment, yet I see more need of a higher work, and that I should look often upon Christ, and God, and heaven, than upon my own heart. At home I can find distempers to trouble me, and some evidences of my peace; but it is above that I must find matter of delight and joy and love and peace itself. Therefore I would have one thought at home upon myself and sins, and many thoughts above upon the high and amiable and beatifying objects.

10. Heretofore I knew much less than now, and yet was not half so much acquainted with my ignorance. I had a great delight in the daily new discoveries which I made, and of the light which shined in upon me (like a man that cometh into a country where he never was before); but I little knew either how imperfectly I understood those very points whose discovery so much delighted me, nor how much might be said against them, nor how many things I was yet a stranger to. But now I find far greater darkness upon all things, and perceive how very little it is that we know in comparison of that which we are ignorant of, and have far meaner thoughts of my own understanding, though I must needs know that it is better furnished than it was then.

¹ = always; continuously.



11. Accordingly I had then a far higher opinion of learned persons and books than I have now; for what I wanted myself, I thought every reverend divine had attained and was familiarly acquainted with. And what books I understood not, by reason of the strangeness of the terms or matter, I the more admired and thought that others understood their worth. But now experience hath constrained me against my will to know that reverend learned men are imperfect, and know but little as well as I, especially those that think themselves the wisest. And the better I am acquainted with them, the more I perceive that we are all yet in the dark. And the more I am acquainted with holy men, that are all for heaven and pretend not much to subtleties, the more I value and honour them. And when I have studied hard to understand some abstruse admired book (as *De Scientia Dei*, *de Providentia circa malum*, *de Decretis*, *de Prædeterminatione*, *de Libertate Creaturæ*, etc.) I have but attained the knowledge of human imperfection, and to see that the author is but a man as well as I.

12. And at first I took more upon my author's credit than now I can do. And when an author was highly commended to me by others, or pleased me in some part, I was ready to entertain the whole; whereas now I take and leave in the same author, and dissent in some things from him that I like best, as well as from others.

13. At first I was greatly inclined to go with the highest in controversies, on one side or other; as with Dr. Twisse, and Mr. Rutherford, and Spanhemius' *De Providentia, et gratia*, etc. But now I can so easily see what to say against both extremes that I am much more inclinable to reconciling principles. And whereas then I thought that conciliators were but ignorant men that were willing to please all, and would pretend to reconcile the world by principles which they did not understand themselves, I have since perceived that if the amiableness of peace and concord had no hand in the business, yet greater light and stronger judgment usually is with the reconcilers than with either of the contending parties (as with Davenant, Hall, Usher, Lud. Crocius, Bergius, Strangius, Camero, etc.); but on both accounts their writings are most acceptable (though I know that moderation may be a pretext of errors).

14. At first the style of authors took as much with me as the argument, and made the arguments seem more forcible. But now I judge not of truth at all by any such ornaments or accidents, but by its naked evidence.

15. I now see more good and more evil in all men than heretofore I did. I see that good men are not so good as I once thought they were, but have more imperfections. And that nearer approach and fuller trial doth make the best appear more weak and faulty than their admirers at a distance think. And I find that few are so bad as either their malicious enemies or censorious separating professors do imagine. In some, indeed, I find that human nature is corrupted into a greater likeness to devils than I once thought any on earth had been. But even in the wicked usually there is more for grace to make advantage of, and more to testify for God and holiness, than I once believed there had been.

16. I less admire gifts of utterance and bare profession of religion than I once did, and have much more charity for many who, by the want of gifts, do make an obscurer profession than they. I once thought that almost all that could pray movingly and fluently, and talk well of religion, had been saints. But experience hath opened to me what odious crimes may consist with high profession; and I have met with divers obscure persons, not noted for any extraordinary profession or forwardness in religion, but only to live a quiet, blameless life, whom I have after found to have long lived, as far as I could discern, a truly godly and sanctified life, only their prayers and duties were by accident kept secret from other men's observation. Yet he that upon this pretence would confound the godly and the ungodly may as well go about to lay heaven and hell together.

17. I am not so narrow in my *special* love as heretofore. Being less censorious, and talking¹ more than I did for saints, it must needs follow that I love more as saints than I did before. I think it not lawful to put that man off with bare church communion and such common love which I must allow the wicked, who professeth himself a true Christian by such a profession as I cannot disprove.

¹ ? taking.

18. I am not so narrow in my principles of Church communion as once I was. I more plainly perceive the difference between the Church as congregate or visible and as regenerate or mystical; and between sincerity and profession; and that a credible profession is proof sufficient of a man's title to church admission; and that the profession is credible *in foro ecclesiæ*, which is not disproved. I am not for narrowing the Church more than Christ himself alloweth us, nor for robbing him of any of his flock. I am more sensible how much it is the will of Christ that every man be the chooser or refuser of his own felicity, and that it lieth most on his own hands whether he will have communion with the Church or not, and that if he be an hypocrite it is himself that will bear the loss.

19. Yet am I more apprehensive than ever of the great use and need of ecclesiastical discipline, and what a sin it is in the pastors of the church to make no distinction but by bare names and sacraments, and to force all the unmeet against their own wills to church communion and sacraments (though the ignorant and erroneous may sometimes be forced to hear instruction). And what a great dishonour to Christ it is when the Church shall be as vicious as pagan and Mahometan assemblies, and shall differ from them only in ceremony and name.

20. I am much more sensible of the evil of schism, and of the separating humour, and of gathering parties, and making several sects in the Church, than I was heretofore. For the effects have showed us more of the mischiefs.

21. I am much more sensible how prone many young professors are to spiritual pride and self-conceitedness, and unruliness and division, and so to prove the grief of their teachers, and firebrands in the Church; and how much of a minister's work lieth in preventing this and humbling and confirming such young unexperienced professors, and keeping them in order in their progress in religion.

22. Yet am I more sensible of the sin and mischief of using men cruelly in matters of religion, and of pretending men's good and the order of the Church, for acts of inhumanity or uncharitableness. Such know not their own infirmity, nor yet the nature of pastoral government, which ought to be paternal and by love; nor do

they know the way to win a soul nor to maintain the Church's peace.

23. My soul is much more afflicted with the thoughts of the miserable world, and more drawn out in desire of their conversion than heretofore. I was wont to look but little further than England in my prayers, as not considering the state of the rest of the world. Or if I prayed for the conversion of the Jews, that was almost all. But now, as I better understand the case of the world and the method of the Lord's Prayer, so there is nothing in the world that lieth so heavy upon my heart as the thought of the miserable nations of the earth. It is the most astonishing part of all God's providence to me, that he so far forsaketh almost all the world, and confineth his special favour to so few; that so small a part of the world hath the profession of Christianity in comparison of heathens, Mahometans and other infidels; and that among professed Christians there are so few that are saved from gross delusions and have but any competent knowledge; and that among *those* there are so few that are seriously religious and truly set their hearts on heaven. I cannot be affected so much with the calamities of my own relations or the land of my nativity as with the case of the heathen, Mahometan, and ignorant nations of the earth. No part of my prayers are so deeply serious as that for the conversion of the infidel and ungodly world, that God's name may be sanctified and his kingdom come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Nor was I ever before so sensible what a plague the division of languages was which hindereth our speaking to them for their conversion; nor what a great sin tyranny is, which keepeth out the Gospel from most of the nations of the world. Could we but go among Tartarians, Turks and heathens and speak their language, I should be but little troubled for the silencing of eighteen hundred ministers at once in England, nor for all the rest that were cast out here, and in Scotland and Ireland; there being no employment in the world so desirable in my eyes as to labour for the winning of such miserable souls: which maketh me greatly honour Mr. John Eliot, the apostle of the Indians in New England, and whoever else have laboured in such work.

24. Yet am I not so much inclined to pass a peremptory sentence of damnation upon all that never heard of Christ,

having some more reason than I knew of before to think that God's dealing with such is much unknown to us, and that the ungodly here among us Christians are in a far worse case than they.

25. My censures of the Papists do much differ from what they were at first. I then thought that their errors in the doctrines of faith were their most dangerous mistakes, as in the points of merit, justification by works, assurance of salvation, the nature of faith, etc. But now I am assured that their misexpressions and misunderstanding us, with our mistakings of them and inconvenient expressing our own opinions, hath made the difference in these points to appear much greater than they are, and that in some of them it is next to none at all. But the great and unreconcilable differences lie in their Church tyranny and usurpations, and in their great corruptions and abasement of God's worship, together with their befriending of ignorance and vice. At first I thought that Mr. Perkins well proved that a Papist cannot go beyond a reprobate; but now I doubt not but that God hath many sanctified ones among them, who have received the true doctrine of Christianity so practically that their contradictory errors prevail not against them to hinder their love of God and their salvation; but that their errors are like a conquerable dose of poison which nature doth overcome. And I can never believe that a man may not be saved by that religion which doth but bring him to the true love of God and to a heavenly mind and life, nor that God will ever cast a soul into hell that truly loveth him. Also at first it would disgrace any doctrine with me if I did but hear it called Popery and Antichristian; but I have long learned to be more impartial and to dislike men for bad doctrine rather than the doctrines for the men, and to know that Satan can use even the names of Popery and Antichrist against a truth.

26. I am deeper afflicted for the disagreements of Christians than I was when I was a younger Christian. Except the case of the infidel world, nothing is so sad and grievous to my thoughts as the case of the divided churches. And therefore I am more deeply sensible of the sinfulness of those prelates and pastors of the churches who are the principal cause of these divisions. O how many millions

of souls are kept by them in ignorance and ungodliness, and deluded by faction as if it were true religion! How is the conversion of infidels hindered by them, and Christ and religion heinously dishonoured! The contentions between the Greek Church and the Roman, the Papists and the Protestants, the Lutherans and the Calvinists, have woefully hindered the kingdom of Christ.

CHAPTER XI

RICHARD BAXTER'S SELF-ANALYSIS AND REVIEW (*cont.*)

Christian concord—No Golden Age—Untrustworthiness of history—A learning or a teaching way.

27. I HAVE spent much of my studies about the terms of Christian concord, and have over and over considered the several ways which several sorts of reconcilers have devised. I have thought of the Papists' way, who think there will be no union but by coming over wholly to their Church; and I have found that it is neither possible nor desirable. I have thought and thought again of the way of the moderating Papists, Cassander, Grotius, Baldwin, etc., and of those that would have all reduced to the state of the times of Gregory the First, before the division of the Greek and Latin Churches, that the Pope might have his primacy, and govern all the Church by the canons of the councils, with a salvo to the rights of kings and patriarchs and prelates, and that the doctrines and worship which then were received might prevail. And for my own part, if I lived in such a state of the Church, I would live peaceably, as glad of unity, though lamenting the corruption and tyranny. But I am fully assured that none of these are the true desirable terms of unity, nor such as are ever like to procure an universal concord. And I am as sure that the true means and terms of concord are obvious and easy to an impartial willing mind; and that these three things alone would easily heal and unite all the Churches:

(1) That all Christian princes and governors take all the coercive power about religion into their own hands (though if prelates and their courts must be used as their *officers* in exercising that coercive power, so be it); and that they make a difference between the approved and the tolerated churches; and that they keep the peace between these churches, and settle their several privileges by a law.

(2) That the churches be accounted tolerable who profess all that is in the Creed, Lord's Prayer and Decalogue in particular, and generally all that they shall find to be revealed in the Word of God, and hold communion in

teaching, prayer, praises and the two sacraments, not obstinately preaching any heresy contrary to the particular articles which they profess, nor seditiously disturbing the public peace; and that such heretical preaching, and such seditious unpeaceableness or notorious wickedness of life, do forfeit their toleration.

(3) And that those that are *further* orthodox in those particulars which rulers think fit to impose upon their subjects have their public maintenance and greater encouragement. Yea, and this much is become necessary, but upon supposition that men will still be so self-conceited and uncharitable as not to forbear their unnecessary impositions. Otherwise there would be found but very few who are tolerable, that are not also in their measure to be approved, maintained and encouraged. And if the primitive simplicity in doctrine, government and worship might serve turn for the terms of the churches' union and communion, all would be well without any more ado; supposing that where Christian magistrates are they keep the peace and repress the offenders, and exercise all the coercive government; and heretics, who will subscribe to the Christian faith, must not be punished because they will subscribe to no more, but because they are proved to preach or promote heresy contrary to the faith which they profess.

28. I am farther than ever I was from expecting great matters of unity, splendour or prosperity to the Church on earth, or that saints should dream of a kingdom of this world, or flatter themselves with the hopes of a golden age, or reigning over the ungodly (till there be "a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness"). And, on the contrary, I am more apprehensive that sufferings must be the Church's most ordinary lot, and Christians indeed must be self-denying cross-bearers, even where there are none but formal nominal Christians to be the cross-makers. And though ordinarily God would have vicissitudes of summer and winter, day and night, that the Church may grow extensively in the summer of prosperity, and intensively and radically in the winter of adversity; yet usually their night is longer than their day, and that day itself hath its storms and tempests. For the prognostics are evident in their causes: (1) The Church will be still imperfect and sinful, and will have those diseases which

need this bitter remedy. (2) Rich men will be the rulers of the world; and rich men will be generally so far from true godliness that they must come to heaven as by human impossibilities, as a camel through a needle's eye. (3) The ungodly will ever have an enmity against the image of God, and he that is born of the flesh will persecute him that was born after the Spirit, and Brotherhood will not keep a Cain from killing an Abel who offereth a more acceptable sacrifice than himself. And the guilty will still hate the light, and make a prey to their pride and malice of a conscionable reprovcr. (4) The pastors will be still troubling the Church with their pride and avarice and contentions; and the worst will be seeking to be the greatest, and they that seek it are likeliest to attain it. (5) He that is highest will be still imposing his conceits upon those under him, and lording it over God's heritage, and with Diotrephes calling out the brethren and ruling them by constraint, and not as volunteers. (6) Those that are truly judicious will still comparatively be few; and consequently the troublers and dividers will be the multitude; and a judicious peacemaker and reconciler will be neglected, slighted, or hated by both extremes. (7) The tenor of the Gospel predictions, precepts, promises and threatenings are fitted to a people in a suffering state. (8) And the graces of God in a believer are mostly suited to a state of suffering. (9) Christians must imitate Christ, and suffer with him before they reign with him; and his kingdom was not of this world. (10) The observation of God's dealing hitherto with the Church in every age confirmeth me; and his befooling them that have dreamed of glorious times. It was such dreams that transported the Munster Anabaptists and the followers of David George in the Low Countries, and Campanella, and the *illuminati* among the Papists, and our English Anabaptists and other fanatics here, both in the army, and the city and country. When they think the Golden Age is come, they show their dreams in their extravagant actions. And as our Fifth Monarchy Men, they are presently upon some unquiet rebellious attempt, to set up Christ in his kingdom whether he will or not. I remember how Abraham Scultetus' *De curriculo vitæ suæ* confesseth the common vanity of himself and other Protestants in Germany, who, seeing the princes in England, France, Bohemia and many other

countries to be all at once both great and wise and friends to reformation, did presently expect the Golden Age. But within one year either death or ruins of war or backslidings had exposed all their expectations to scorn, and laid them lower than before.

29. I do not lay so great a stress upon the external modes and forms of worship as many young professors do. I have suspected myself, as perhaps the reader may do, that this is from a cooling and declining from my former zeal (though the truth is, I never much complied with men of that mind). But I find that judgment and charity are the causes of it, as far as I am able to discover. I cannot be so narrow in my principles of church-communion as many are, that are so much for a liturgy or so much against it, so much for ceremonies or so much against them that they can hold communion with no Church that is not of their mind and way. If I were among the Greeks, the Lutherans, the Independents, yea, the Anabaptists (that own no heresy, nor set themselves against charity and peace), I would hold sometimes occasional communion with them as Christians (if they will give me leave, without forcing me to any sinful subscription or action); though my most usual communion should be with that society which I thought most agreeable to the Word of God, if I were free to choose. I cannot be of their opinion that think God will not accept him that prayeth by the Common Prayer Book, and that such forms are a self-invented worship which God rejecteth: nor yet can I be of their mind that say the like of extemporary prayers.

30. I am much less regardful of the approbation of man, and set much lighter by contempt or applause than I did long ago. I am oft suspicious that this is not only from the increase of self-denial and humility, but partly from my being glutted and surfeited with human applause. And all worldly things appear most vain and unsatisfactory when we have tried them most. But though I feel that this hath some hand in the effect, yet as far as I can perceive, the knowledge of man's nothingness and God's transcendent greatness, with whom it is that I have most to do, and the sense of the brevity of human things and the nearness of eternity are the principal causes of this effect, which some have imputed to self-conceitedness and morosity.

31. I am more and more pleased with a solitary life; and though in a way of self-denial I could submit to the most public life for the service of God when he requireth it, and would not be unprofitable that I might be private, yet I must confess it is much more pleasing to myself to be retired from the world and to have very little to do with men, and to converse with God and conscience and good books, of which I have spoken my heart in my *Divine Life*, Part III.

32. Though I was never much tempted to the sin of covetousness, yet my fear of dying was wont to tell me that I was not sufficiently loosened from this world. But I find that it is comparatively very easy to me to be loose from this world, but hard to live by faith above. To despise earth is easy to me; but not so easy to be acquainted and conversant in heaven. I have nothing in this world which I could not easily let go; but to get satisfying apprehensions of the other world is the great and grievous difficulty.

33. I am much more apprehensive than long ago of the odiousness and danger of the sin of pride; scarce any sin appeareth more odious to me. Having daily more acquaintance with the lamentable naughtiness and frailty of man, and of the mischiefs of that sin, and especially in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical, I think so far as any man is proud he is kin to the devil, and utterly a stranger to God and to himself. It's a wonder that it should be a *possible* sin to men that still carry about with them, in soul and body, such humbling matter of remedy as we all do.

34. I more than ever lament the unhappiness of the nobility, gentry and great ones of the world, who live in such temptation to sensuality, curiosity and wasting of their time about a multitude of little things, and whose lives are too often the transcript of the sins of Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness and want of compassion to the poor. And I more value the life of the poor labouring man, but especially of him that hath neither poverty nor riches.

35. I am much more sensible than heretofore of the breadth and length and depth of the radical, universal, odious sin of selfishness, and therefore have written so much against it; and of the excellency and necessity of self-denial, and of a public mind, and of loving our neighbour as ourselves.

36. I am more and more sensible that most controversies have more need of right stating than of debating; and if my skill be increased in anything it is in that, in narrowing controversies by explication, and separating the real from the verbal, and proving to many contenders that they differ less than they think they do.

37. I am more solicitous than I have been about my duty to God and less solicitous about his dealings with me, as being assured that he will do all things well, and as acknowledging the goodness of all the declarations of his holiness even in the punishment of man, and as knowing that there is no rest but in the will and goodness of God.

38. Though my works were never such as could be any temptation to me to dream of obliging God by proper merit in commutative justice, yet one of the most ready, constant, undoubted evidences of my uprightness and interest in his covenant is the consciousness of my living as devoted to him. And I the easilier believe the pardon of my failings through my Redeemer while I know that I serve no other master, and that I know no other end, or trade, or business, but that I am imployed in his work, and make it the business of my life, and live to him in the world, notwithstanding my infirmities. And this bent and business of my life, with my longing desires after perfection, in the knowledge and belief and love of God, and in a holy and heavenly mind and life, are the two standing, constant, discernible evidences which most put me out of doubt of my sincerity. And I find that constant action and duty is it that keepeth the first always in sight; and constant wants and weaknesses, and coming short of my desires, do make those desires still the more troublesome, and so the more easily still perceived.

39. Though my habitual judgment and resolution and scope of life be still the same, yet I find a great mutability as to actual apprehensions and degrees of grace, and consequently find that so mutable a thing as the mind of man would never keep itself if God were not its keeper. When I have been seriously musing upon the reasons of Christianity, with the concurrent evidences methodically placed in their just advantages before my eyes, I am so clear in my belief of the Christian verities that Satan hath little room for a temptation. But sometimes, when he hath on a sudden set

some temptation before me, when the foresaid evidences have been out of the way or less upon my thoughts, he hath by such surprises amazed me and weakened my faith in the present act. So also as to the love of God and trusting in him, sometimes when the motives are clearly apprehended, the duty is more easy and delightful; and at other times I am merely passive and dull, if not guilty of actual despondency and distrust.

40. I am much more cautelous in my belief of history than heretofore. Not that I run into their extreme that will believe nothing because they cannot believe all things. But I am abundantly satisfied by the experience of this age, that there is no believing two sorts of men, *ungodly* men and *partial* men. Though an honest heathen of no religion may be believed, where enmity against religion biasset him not; yet a debauched Christian, besides his enmity to the power and practice of his own religion, is seldom without some farther bias of interest or faction; especially when these concur, and a man is both ungodly and ambitious, espousing an interest contrary to a holy heavenly life, and also factious, embodying himself with a sect or party suited to his spirit and designs, there is no believing his word or oath. If you read any man partially bitter against others as differing from him in opinion, or as cross to his greatness, interest or designs, take heed how you believe any more than the historical evidence distinct from his word compelleth you to believe. The prodigious lies which have been published in this age in matters of fact, with unblushing confidence, even where thousands or multitudes of eye- and ear-witnesses knew all to be false, doth call men to take heed what history they believe, especially where power and violence affordeth that privilege to the reporter that no man dare answer him or detect his fraud, or if they do their writings are all suppressed. As long as men have liberty to examine and contradict one another, one may partly conjecture by comparing their words on which side the truth is like to lie. But when great men write history, or flatteries by their appointment, which no man dare contradict, believe it but as you are constrained. Yet in these cases I can freely believe history: (1) If the person show that he is acquainted with what he saith; (2) and if he show you the evidences

of honesty and conscience and the fear of God (which may be much perceived in the spirit of a writing); (3) and if he appear to be impartial and charitable, and a lover of goodness and of mankind, and not possessed with malignity or personal ill-will and malice, nor carried away by faction or personal interest. Conscionable men dare not lie; but faction and interest abate men's tenderness of conscience. And a charitable impartial heathen may speak truth in a love to truth and hatred of a lie. But ambitious malice and false religion will not stick to serve themselves on anything. It's easy to trace the footsteps of veracity in the intelligence, impartiality and ingenuity of a Thuanus, a Guicciardini, a Paulus Venetus, though Papists, and of Socrates and Sozomen, though accused by the factious of favouring the Novatians; and many Protestants in a Melancthon, a Bucholtzer and many more; and among physicians in such as Crato, Platerus, etc. But it's as easy to see the footsteps of partiality and faction and design in a Genebrard, a Baronius, and a multitude of their companions, and to see reason of suspicion in many more. Therefore I confess I give but halting credit to most histories that are written, not only against the Albigenses and Waldenses, but against most of the ancient heretics, who have left us none of their own writings in which they speak for themselves, and I heartily lament that the historical writings of the ancient schismatics and heretics (as they were called) perished, and that partiality suffered them not to survive, that we might have had more light in the Church affairs of those times, and been better able to judge between the Fathers and them. And as I am prone to think that few of them were so bad as their adversaries made them, so I am apt to think that such as the Novatians, and Luciferians, and Indians, etc., whom [even] their adversaries commend, were very good men, and more godly than most Catholics, however mistaken in some one point. Sure I am that as the lies of the Papists, of Luther, Zwinglius, Calvin and Beza, are visibly malicious and impudent by the common plenary contradicting evidence, and yet the multitude of their seduced ones believe them all in despite of truth and charity; so in this age there have been such things written against parties and persons whom the writers design to make odious so notoriously false as you would think that the sense of

their honour at least should have made it impossible for such men to write. My own eyes have read such words and actions asserted with most vehement iterated unblushing confidence, which abundance of ear-witnesses, even of their own parties, must needs know to have been altogether false; and therefore, having myself now written this history of myself, notwithstanding my protestation that I have not in anything wilfully gone against the truth, I expect no more credit from the reader than the self-evidencing light of the matter, with concurrent rational advantages, from persons and things and other witnesses, shall constrain him to, if he be a person that is unacquainted with the author himself, and the other evidences of his veracity and credibility. And I have purposely omitted almost all the descriptions of any persons that ever opposed me, or that ever I or my brethren suffered by, because I know that the appearance of interest and partiality might give a fair excuse to the reader's incredulity (although, indeed, the true description of persons is much of the very life of history, and especially of the history of the age which I have lived in; yet to avoid the suspicion of partiality I have left it out). Except only when I speak of the Cromwellians and sectaries, where I am the more free, because none suspecteth my interest to have engaged me against them; but (with the rest of my brethren) I have opposed them in the obedience of my conscience, when by pleasing them I could have had almost anything that they could have given me, and when beforehand I expected that the present governors should silence me and deprive me of maintenance, house and home, as they have done by me and many hundreds more. Therefore I supposed that my descriptions and censures of those persons which would have enriched and honoured me, and of their actions against that party which hath silenced, impoverished and accused me, and which beforehand I expected should do so, are beyond the suspicion of envy, self-interest or partiality. If not, I there also am content that the reader exercise his liberty and believe no worse even of these men than the evidence of fact constraineth him.

Thus much of the alterations of my soul, since my younger years, I thought best to give the reader, instead of all those experiences and actual motions and affections which I

suppose him rather to have expected an account of. And having transcribed thus much of a life which God hath read, and conscience hath read and must further read, I humbly lament it, and beg pardon of it, as sinful and too unequal and unprofitable. And I warn the reader to amend that in his own which he findeth to have been amiss in mine; confessing also that much hath been amiss which I have not here particularly mentioned, and that I have not lived according to the abundant mercies of the Lord. But what I have recorded hath been especially to perform my vows and declare his praise to all generations, who hath filled up my days with his unvaluable favours, and bound me to bless his name for ever. And also to prevent the defective performance of this task by some overvaluing brethren, who I know intended it, and were unfitter to do it than myself. And for such reasons as Junius, Scultetus, Thuanus, and many others have done the like before me. The principal of which are these three: (1) As travellers and seamen use to do after great adventures and deliverances, I hereby satisfy my conscience, in praising the blessed Author of all those undeserved mercies which have filled up my life; (2) Foreseeing by the attempts of Bishop Morley what Prelatists and Papists are like to say of me when they have none to contradict them, and how possible it is that those that never knew me may believe them, though they have lost their hopes with all the rest, I take it to be my duty to be so faithful to that stock of reputation which God hath intrusted me with, as to defend it at the rate of opening the truth. Such as have made the world believe that Luther consulted with the devil, that Calvin was a stigmatised Sodomite, that Beza turned Papist, etc., to blast their labours, I know are very like to say anything by me which their interest or malice tell them will any way advantage their cause, to make my writings unprofitable when I am dead; (3) That young Christians may be warned by the mistakes and failings of my unriper times, to learn in patience, and live in watchfulness, and not be fierce and proudly confident in their first conceptions, and to reverence ripe experienced age, and to take heed of taking such for their chief guides as have nothing but immature and unexperienced judgments, with fervent affections, and free and confident expressions; but to

learn of them that have with holiness study, time and trial, looked about them as well on one side as the other, and attained to clearness and impartiality in their judgments.

41. But having mentioned the changes which I think were for the better, I must add that—as I confessed many of my sins before, so since I have been guilty of many, which because materially they seemed small, have had the less resistance, and yet on the review to trouble more than if they had been greater done in ignorance—it can be no small sin formally which is committed against knowledge and conscience and deliberation, whatever excuse it have. To have sinned while I preached and wrote against sin, and had such abundant and great obligations from God, and made so many promises against it, doth lay me very low; not so much in fear of hell, as in great displeasure against myself, and such self-abhorrence as would cause revenge upon myself were it not forbidden. When God forgiveth me I cannot forgive myself, especially for any rash words or deeds by which I have seemed injurious and less tender and kind than I should have been to my near and dear relations, whose love abundantly obliged me, when such are dead, though we never differed in point of interest or¹ any great matter, every sour or cross provoking word which I gave them maketh me almost unreconcilable to myself, and tells me how repentance brought some of old to pray to the dead whom they had wronged, to forgive them in the hurry of their passion.

And though I before told the change of my judgment against provoking writings, I have had more will than skill since to avoid such. I must mention it by way of penitent confession, that I am too much inclined to such words in controversial writings which are too keen, and apt to provoke the person whom I write against. Sometimes I suspect that age soureth my spirits, and sometimes I am apt to think that it is long thinking and speaking of such things that maketh me weary, and less patient with others that understand them not. And sometimes I am ready to think that it is out of a hatred of the flattering humour which now prevaieth so in the world that few persons are able to bear the truth. And I am sure that I cannot only bear myself such language as I use to others, but that I

¹ ? on, in.

expect it. I think all these are partly causes; but I am sure the principal cause is a long custom of studying how to speak and write in the keenest manner to the common, ignorant and ungodly people (without which keenness to them no sermon nor book does much good), which hath so habituated me to it that I am still falling into the same with others, forgetting that many ministers and professors of strictness do desire the greatest sharpness to the vulgar and to their adversaries, and the greatest lenity and smoothness and comfort, if not honour, to themselves. And I have a strong natural inclination to speak of every subject just as it is, and to call a spade a spade, and *verba rebus aptare*; so as that the thing spoken of may be fullest known by the words, which methinks is part of our speaking truly. But I unfeignedly confess that it is faulty, because imprudent (for that is not a good means which doth harm, because it is not fitted to the end), and because whilst the readers think me angry (though I feel no passion at such times in myself) it is scandalous and a hindrance to the usefulness of what I write; and especially because (though I feel no anger, yet which is worse) I know that there is some want of honour and love or tenderness to others; or else I should not be apt to use such words as open their weakness and offend them. And therefore I repent of it, and wish all over-sharp passages were expunged from my writings, and desire forgiveness of God and man. And yet I must say that I am oft afraid of the contrary extreme, lest when I speak against great and dangerous errors and sins (though of persons otherwise honest) I should encourage men to them by speaking too easily of them (as Eli did to his sons), and lest I should so favour the person as may befriend the sin and wrong the Church. And I must say, as the New England Synodists in their defence against Mr. Davenport, page 2, Preface: "We heartily desire that, as much as may be, all expressions and reflections may be forborne that tend to break the bond of love. Indeed, such is our infirmity that the naked discovery of the fallacy or invalidity of another's allegations or arguings is apt to provoke. This in disputes is unavoidable."

And therefore I am less for a disputing way than ever, believing that it tempteth men to bend their wits, to defend their errors and oppose the truth, and hindereth

usually their information. And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, etc. Therefore I am most in judgment for a learning or a teaching way of converse. In all companies I will be glad either to hear those speak that can teach me, or to be heard of those that have need to learn.

And that which I named before on the by is grown one of my great diseases. I have lost much of that zeal which I had to propagate any truths to others, save the mere fundamentals. When I perceive people or ministers (which is too common) to think they know what indeed they do not, and to dispute those things which they never thoroughly studied, or expect I should debate the case with them, as if an hour's talk would serve instead of an acute understanding and seven years' study, I have no zeal to make them of my opinion, but an impatience of continuing discourse with them on such subjects, and am apt to be silent or to turn to something else, which (though there be some reason for it) I feel cometh from a want of zeal for the truth, and from an impatient temper of mind. I am ready to think that people should quickly understand all in a few words; and if they cannot, lazily to despair of them and leave them to themselves. And I the more know that it is sinful in me, because it is partly so in other things, even about the faults of my servants or other inferiors, if three or four times warning do no good on them, I am much tempted to despair of them, and turn them away and leave them to themselves.

I mention all these distempers that my faults may be a warning to others to take heed, as they call on myself for repentance and watchfulness. O Lord, for the merits and sacrifice and intercession of Christ, be merciful to me a sinner, and forgive my known and unknown sins.

PART TWO



PART TWO

CHAPTER I

ENDEAVOURS AFTER CHRISTIAN CONCORD—THE ASSOCIATIONS—FUNDAMENTALS AND DR. OWEN

Comprehension of denominational systems—The Associations—Fundamentals—Dr. Owen—Cromwell's tedious speech—Usher's "Reduction of Episcopacy."

IN the time of the late unhappy wars in these kingdoms the controversies about Church government were in most men's mouths, and made the greatest noise. . . Of the four contending parties (the Erastian, Episcopal, Presbyterian and Independent) each one had some truths in peculiar which the other overlooked or took little notice of, and each one had their proper mistakes which gave advantage to their adversaries, though all of them had so much truth in common among them as would have made these kingdoms happy if it had been unanimously and soberly reduced to practice by prudent and charitable men. . . .

I perceived then that every party beforementioned, having some truth or good in which it was more eminent than the rest, it was no impossible thing to separate all that from the error and the evil, and that among all the truths which they held either in common or in controversy there was no contradiction. And therefore that he that would procure the welfare of the Church must do his best to promote all the truth and good which was held by every part, and to leave out all their errors and their evil, and not take up all that any party had espoused as their own. . . .

But the greatest advantage which I found for concord and pacification was among a great number of ministers and people who had addicted themselves to no sect or party at all; though the vulgar called them by the name of Presbyterians. And the truth is, as far as I could discover, this was the case of the greatest number of the godly ministers and people throughout England. . . Yea,

multitudes whom I had no converse with, I understood to be of this mind; so that this moderate number (I am loth to call them a *party* because they were for Catholicism against *parties*), being no way pre-engaged, made the work of concord much more hopeful than else it would have been, or than I thought it to be when I first attempted it.

Things being in this case I stood still some years as a looker-on, and contented myself to wish and pray for peace, and only drop now and then a word for it in my practical writings, which hath since been none of my smallest troubles. . . .

Next this, the state of my own congregation and the necessity of my duty constrained me to make some attempt. . . I had two very great encouragements. The one was an honest, humble, tractable people at home, engaged in no party, Prelatical, Presbyterian or Independent, but loving godliness and peace and hating schism as that which they perceived to tend to the ruin of religion. The other was a company of honest, godly, serious, humble ministers in the country where I lived, who were not one of them (that associated) Presbyterian or Independent, and not past four or five of them Episcopal, but disengaged faithful men. At a lecture at Worcester I first procured a meeting and told them of the design, which they all approved. They imposed it upon me to draw up the form of agreement. The matter of it was to consist "So much of the Church Order and Discipline as the Episcopal, Presbyterian and Independent are agreed in, as belonging to the pastors of each particular Church." . . .

The ministers that thus associated were, for number, parts and piety, the most considerable part of all that county, and some out of some neighbouring counties that were near us. There was not, that I know of, one through Presbyterian among them, because there was but one such that I knew of in all the county, and he lived somewhat remote. Nor did any Independent subscribe, save one. . . .

Having all agreed in this Association, we proposed publicly to our people so much as required their consent and practice, and gave every family a copy in print, and a sufficient time to consider and understand it, and then put it in execution; and I published it with the reasons of it, and an explication of what seemed doubtful in it,

in a book which I called *Christian Concord*, which pleased me and displeased others. . . .

Now, in my *Christian Concord* I had confessed that it was only the moderate ancient Episcopal party which I hoped for agreement with, it being impossible for the Presbyterian and Independent party to associate with them that take them and their churches, and all the reformed ministers and churches that have not episcopal ordination, for null. . . .

In our Association we agreed upon a monthly meeting at certain market towns for conference about such cases of discipline as required consultation and consent. Accordingly at Evesham and Kidderminster they were constantly kept up. . . .

This monthly meeting of the ministers proved of exceeding great benefit and comfort to us, where, when we had dined together, we spent an hour or two in disputation on some question which was chosen the week before; and when the respondent and opponent had done their part they were pleased to make it my work to determine. And after that, if we had any church business (as aforesaid) we consulted of it. And many ministers met with us that were not of our Association, for the benefit of these disputations. I must confess this was the comfortablest time of all my life, through the great delight I had in the company of that society of honest, sincere, laborious, humble ministers of Christ. . . .

About the same time that we were thus associating in Worcestershire, it pleased God to stir up the ministers of Cumberland and Westmorland to the same course, who, though they knew not what we had done, yet fell upon the same way, and agreed on articles to the same purpose and of the same sense and importance as ours were; of which Mr. Richard Gilpin (one of them, a worthy faithful minister) sent me word when he saw our articles in print; and they also printed theirs (to save the writing of many copies, and to excite others to the same way), and they found the same readiness to union among the brethren as we had done. . . .

Hereupon many counties began to associate, as Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, Somersetshire, Hampshire, Essex and others. And some of them printed the articles of their

agreement. In a word, a great desire of concord began to possess all good people in the land, and our breaches seemed ready to heal. . . .

It must be still noted that all this was when diocesans were put down, and few saw any probability of restoring them, and many religious persons dreaded such a restoration.

When Cromwell's faction were making him Protector, they drew up a thing which they called "The Government of England, etc." Therein they determined that all should have liberty or free exercise of their religion "who professed faith in God by Jesus Christ." . . . Hereupon the committee appointed to that business were required to nominate certain divines to draw up *in terminis* the fundamentals of religion, to be as a test in this toleration. . .

I knew how ticklish a business the enumeration of fundamentals was, and of what very ill consequence it would be if it were ill done, and how unsatisfactorily that question, "What are your fundamentals?" is usually answered to the Papists. My own judgment was this, that we must distinguish between the sense (or matter) and the words, and that it's only the sense that is primarily and properly our fundamentals, and the words no further than as they are needful to express that sense to others or represent it to our own conception; that the word "fundamentals" being metaphorical and ambiguous, the word "essentials" is much fitter, it being nothing but what is essential or constitutive of true religion, which is understood by us usually when we speak of fundamentals: that *quoad rem* there is no more essential or fundamental in religion but what is contained in our baptismal covenant, "I believe in God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and give up myself in covenant to him, renouncing the flesh, the world and the devil." . . . And *quoad verba*, I suppose that no particular words in the world are essentials of our religion. Otherwise no man could be saved without the language which those words belong to. He that understandeth not *Credo in Deum* may be saved if he *believe in God*. Also I suppose that no particular *formula* of words in any or all languages is essential to our religion, for he that expresseth his faith in another form of words of the same importance professeth a saving faith. And as to the

use of a form of words to express our belief of the essential, it is various, and therefore the form accordingly is variable. . . .

Therefore I would have had the brethren to have offered the parliament the Creed, Lord's Prayer and Decalogue alone as our essentials or fundamentals, which at least *contain all* that is necessary to salvation, and hath been by all the ancient Churches taken for the sum of their religion. And whereas they still said, "A Socinian or a Papist will subscribe all this," I answered them: "So much the better, and so much the fitter it is to be the matter of our concord. But if you are afraid of communion with Papists and Socinians, it must not be avoided by making a new rule or test of faith which they will not subscribe to, or by forcing others to subscribe to more than *they* can do, but by calling them to account whenever in preaching or writing they contradict or abuse the truth to which they have subscribed. This is the work of government." . . .

When I saw they would not change their method, I saw also that there was nothing for me and others of my mind to do but only to hinder them from doing harm, and trusting in their own opinions or crude conceits among our fundamentals. And presently Dr. Owen, in extolling the Holy Scriptures, put in "That no man could know God to salvation by any other means." I told him that this was neither a fundamental nor a truth, and that if among the Papists or any others a poor Christian should believe by the teaching of another, without ever knowing that there is a Scripture, he should be saved, because it is promised that whoever believed should be saved. He said awhile that there could be no other way of Saving Revelation of Jesus Christ.¹ I told him that he² was savingly revealed by preaching many years before the New Testament was written. . . .

At this time the Lord Broghill and the Earl of Warwick brought me to preach before Cromwell the Protector (which was the only time that ever I preached to him, save once long before, when he was an inferior man among other auditors). I knew not which way to provoke him better to his duty than by preaching on 1 Cor. i. 10,

¹ = no other way of presenting the Saving Revelation.

² = Christ.

against the divisions and distractions of the Church, and showing how mischievous a thing it was for politicians to maintain such divisions for their own ends, that they might fish in troubled waters and keep the Church by its divisions in a state of weakness, lest it should be able to offend them, and to show the necessity and means of union. But the plainness and nearness, I heard, was displeasing to him and his courtiers; but they put it up.

A while after Cromwell sent to speak with me, and when I came, in the presence only of three of his chief men, he began a long and tedious speech to me of God's providence in the change of the government, and how God had owned it, and what great things had been done at home and abroad in the peace with Spain and Holland, etc. When he had wearied us all with speaking thus slowly about an hour, I told him it was too great condescension to acquaint me so fully with all these matters which were above me, but I told him that we took our ancient monarchy to be a blessing and not an evil to the land, and humbly craved his patience that I might ask him how England had ever forfeited that blessing, and unto whom the forfeiture was made (I was fain to speak of the species of government only, for they had lately made it treason by a law to speak for the person of the king). Upon that question he was awakened into some passion, and told me it was no forfeiture, but God had changed it as pleased him; and then he let fly at the parliament (which thwarted him), and especially by name at four or five of those members which were my chief acquaintance; and I presumed to defend them against his passion; and thus four or five hours were spent.

A few days after he sent for me again to hear my judgment about liberty of conscience (which he pretended to be most zealous for) before almost all his Privy Council; where, after another slow tedious speech of his, I told him a little of my judgment. And when two of his company had spun out a great deal more of the time in suchlike tedious (but mere ignorant) speeches, some four or five hours being spent, I told him that if he would be at the labour to read it, I could tell him more of my mind in writing in two sheets than in that way of speaking in many days, and that I had a paper on that subject by me,

written for a friend, which if he would peruse, and allow for the change of the person, he would know my sense. He received the paper after, but I scarce believe that he ever read it; for I saw that what he learned must be from himself, being more disposed to speak many hours than to hear one, and little heeding what another said when he had spoken himself. . . .

In this time of my abode at the Lord Broghill's fell out¹ all the acquaintance I had with the most reverend, learned, humble and pious Primate of Ireland, Archbishop Usher, then living at the Earl of Peterborough's house in Martin's Lane. Sometimes he came to me, and oft I went to him. . . .

I asked him his judgment about the validity of presbyters' ordination, which he asserted, and told me that the king asked him at the Isle of Wight whereever he found in antiquity that presbyters alone ordained any; and that he answered, "I can show your majesty more, even where presbyters alone successively ordained bishops," and instanced in Hierom's² words, *Epist. ad Evagrium*, of the presbyters of Alexandria choosing and making their own bishops from the days of Mark till Heraclus and Dionysius. I asked him also whether the paper be his that is called *A Reduction of Episcopacy to the Form of Synodical Government*, which he owned, and Dr. Bernard after witnessed to be his.

And of his own accord he told me confidently, "That synods are not properly for government, but for agreement among the pastors; and a synod of bishops are not the governors of any one bishop there present." . . .

¹ = occurred.

² = Jerome's.

CHAPTER II

LONDON

*Suppressed passage on Lauderdale—The king and the Bible
—Another suppressed passage—The Restoration and
after—Countess of Balcarres and her daughter—
Chaplain-in-ordinary—Interviews with the king.*

1660

[I HAD received many letters full of extraordinary kindness from the Earl of Lauderdale, then prisoner in Windsor Castle, and he had sent to me purposely with the first Mr. James Sharpe, now Archbishop of St. Andrews. And, after that, his profession of respect and kindness and great condescensions and judicious letters were all so extraordinary as much obliged me to hearken to his judgment. His real affection to the king was very great, and the character he gave of him was very high and honourable, and when the fanatics gave out that my judgment was that our obligations to R. Cromwell were not dissolved, nor could be till another parliament or his full renunciation did it, he sent me word that he would presently¹ take a journey to visit me and satisfy me (as soon as he was out of prison, for the restored parliament presently¹ set him free). Therefore, to prevent his trouble and for other reasons, I found myself obliged to go to London (I came to London April 13, 1660. *Marg.*), when he was pleased (Apr. 14. *Marg.*) to come to me with the renewed expressions of extraordinary kindness which he hath hitherto continued, as did also Sir Willm. Morrice, now Secretary of State.

Presently¹ after my coming to London, the Earl of Lauderdale, studying the service of his majesty, thought it best for the obviating of the misreports and vulgar fears that were received about the king's religion to procure four or five testimonial letters to be written from

¹ = immediately.

France to assure the people of his majesty's firmness to the Protestant religion, and to encourage them to take the opportunity to express their loyalty in endeavouring his return. One of these letters was directed to myself from Monsieur Gaches, a famous pious preacher at Charenton, which with the rest was translated and published by the Earl of Lauderdale's procurement (Sir Robert Murray being the man that in France procured the writing and sending of them to the Earl, the Countess of Balcarres also assisting the business).]

When I was at London, the new parliament being called, they presently appointed a day of fasting and prayer for themselves. The House of Commons chose Mr. Calamy, Dr. Gauden and myself to preach and pray with them at St. Margaret's, Westminster. In that sermon I uttered some passages that were after matter of some discourse. . . I told them it was easy for moderate men to come to a fair agreement, and that the late reverend Primate of Ireland and myself had agreed in half an hour. . . .

The next morning after this day of fasting did the parliament unanimously vote home the king, *nemine contradicente*, and do that which former actions had but prepared for.

The city of London about that time was to keep a day of solemn thanksgiving for General Monk's success, and the lord mayor and aldermen desired me to preach before them at St. Paul's Church. Wherein I so endeavoured to show the value of that mercy as to show also how sin and men's abuse might turn it into matter of calamity, and what should be right bounds and qualifications of that joy. The moderate were pleased with it, the fanatics were offended with me for keeping such a thanksgiving, the diocesan party thought I did suppress their joy. The words may be seen in the sermon ordered to be printed.

But the other words about my agreement with Bishop Usher, in the sermon before the parliament, put me to most trouble. For presently many moderate episcopal divines came to me to know what those terms of our agreement were. And thinking verily that others of their party had been as moderate as themselves, they entered upon debates for our general concord, and we agreed as easily among ourselves in private, as if almost all our

differences were at an end. . . . Thus men were every day talking of concord, but to little purpose, as appeared in the issue. . . .

When the king was to be sent for by the parliament, certain divines, with others, were sent by the parliament and city to him into Holland—viz. Mr. Calamy, Dr. Manton, Mr. Bowles and divers others—and some went voluntarily; to whom his majesty gave such encouraging promises of peace as raised some of them to high expectations. And when he came in, as he passed through the city towards Westminster, the London ministers in their places attended him with acclamations, and by the hands of old Mr. Arthur Jackson presented him with a rich-adorned Bible, which he received, and told them it should be the rule of his actions. . . .

[A little before this, while the people were desirous to be satisfied of the king, because they had various reports of him, a paper was printed, called his *Character*, by a nameless author, but said to be by one Colonel Tuke, a Papist, which much wronged the king in the esteem of many; for while he extolled him in other respects, he bringeth in a confession that if he have been charmed with the allurements of Venus it is not to be wondered at, etc.; whenas it had been fitter for a subject to have been silent, and not, under pretence of alleviating a fault which Scripture maketh odious, to have divulged it to the world.]

And not long after, hearing that the Countess of Balcarres was not well, I went to visit her, and found her grievously afflicted for her eldest daughter, the Lady Ann Lindsey, about sixteen or seventeen years of age, who was suddenly turned Papist by she knew not whom. . . . She desired me that I would speak to her daughter, and try whether she would yet enter into conference about the reason of her faith. But she utterly refused it, and would say nothing to that purpose, but refer us to the Church, and profess her acquiescence in its judgment, and when I desired to know of her how she knew what was the judgment of the Church, whether it were not merely the word of the priest that satisfied her in this, and therefore desired her that she would hear that priest or Jesuit on whose word she built all her faith, in the presence of someone that was fit to help her in the trial of his assertions, and entreated

her to procure a conference in her hearing between him and me, she promised readily that it should be done. The next time I came again and asked whether she had spoke with him about it, and whether time and place were agreed on, she confidently told me that he was ready to do it when I pleased. . . . The next time I came to know the day, she told me the gentleman would not meet nor dispute. . . . But yet that her deceiver might have no excuse, I offered her that I would do all that he desired, and manage it in writing, so be it he would first but spend two hours in verbal disputation in the way I had proposed, viz. that he should spend one hour in giving his reasons for her change, and I might answer them, and the other hour I would give my reasons against it, and he should answer me. And after that we would go to it by writing. But a day or two after, when I came for answer to this proposal, the lady was gone, being secretly stolen from her mother in a coach, and so I understood the meaning of this offer, and never could see the face of any of her priests.

At last it was discovered that the man that seduced¹ her and refused disputation was Mr. Johnson (or Terret), the same man that I had before conferred and wrote with. And yet when I asked her whether it were he, she plainly and positively said it was not; and when a servant went after her coach and overtook her in Lincoln's Inn Fields, she positively promised to come again, and said she went but to see a friend. Also she complained to the queen-mother of her mother, as if she used her hardly for religion, which was false. In a word, her mother told me that before she turned Papist she scarce ever heard a lie from her, and since then she could believe nothing that she said. This was the darling of that excellent, wise, religious lady (the widow of an excellent lord), which made the affliction great, and taught her to moderate her affections to all creatures. This perversion had been a long time secretly working before she knew of it; all which time the young lady would join in prayer with her mother, and jeer at Popery till she was detected, and then she said she might join with them no more.

They that stole her away conveyed her to France, and there put her into a nunnery, where she is since dead. Not

¹ = perverted.

long after her departure, she sent a letter superscribed to her lady mother, etc., and subscribed "Sister Anna Maria," etc. It contained the reasons of her perversion. And though I knew they were not like to suffer her to read it, I wrote an answer to it, at her mother's desire, which was sent to her by her mother. . . .

When the king was received with the general acclamation of his people, the expectations of men were various, according to their several interests and inducements. Some plain and moderate Episcopal men thought of reconciliation and union with the said Presbyterians; yea, and a reward to the Presbyterians for bringing in the king. . . .

For the gratifying and engaging some chief Presbyterians that had brought in the king, by the Earl of Manchester's means (who then being Lord Chamberlain, it belongeth to his place), above ten or twelve of them were designed to be the king's chaplains-in-ordinary. Mr. Calamy and Dr. Reynolds were first put in, and then Mr. Ash was importuned to accept it, and then they put me in for one (Mr. Math. Newcomen refused it). And then Dr. Spurstow, Dr. Wallis, Dr. Bates, Dr. Manton, Mr. Case, etc., were admitted. (But never any of them was called to preach at court, saving Mr. Calamy, Dr. Reynolds, myself and Dr. Spurstow, each of us once. And I suppose never a man of them all ever received or expected a penny for the salary of their places.)

When I was invited by the Lord Broghill (afterwards Earl of Orrery) to meet him at the Lord Chamberlain's, they both persuaded me to accept the place, to be one of his majesty's chaplains-in-ordinary. I desired to know whether it were his majesty's desire, or only the effect of their favourable request to him. They told me that it was his majesty's own desire, and that he would take it as an acceptable furtherance of his service. Whereupon I took an oath from the Lord Chamberlain, as a Household Servant of his majesty's, to be true and faithful to him, and discover any conspiracy I should know of, etc. . . .

A little after, the Lord Broghill was pleased to come to me; and he told me that he had told the king of the business of a conference for an agreement, and that the king took it very well and was resolved to further it. And about the same time the Earl of Manchester signified as much to

Mr. Calamy. So that Mr. Calamy, Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Ash and myself went about it to the Earl of Manchester, Lord Chamberlain, and after consultations of the business with him, he determined of a day to bring us to the king. Mr. Calamy (to whom both I, and I think all the rest, did leave the nomination of the persons to be employed) advised that all that were the king's chaplains of us might be called to the consultation, and that we four might not seem to take so much upon us without others (if we did go once without them to the king, which I well remember not, that was all). So Dr. Wallis, Dr. Manton, and Dr. Spurstow, etc., went with us to the king, who, with the Lord Chancellor and the Earl of St. Albans, etc., came to us in the Lord Chamberlain's lodgings. We exercised more boldness at first than afterwards would have been borne, when some of the rest had congratulated his majesty's happy restoration and declared the large hope which they had of a happy union among all Dissenters by his means, etc. I presumed to speak to him of the concernments of religion, and how far we were from desiring the continuance of any factions or parties in the Church, and how much a happy union would conduce to the good of the land, and to his majesty's satisfaction; and though there were turbulent fanatic persons in his dominions, yet that those ministers and godly people, whose peace we humbly craved of him, were no such persons but such as longed after concord and were truly loyal to him, and desired no more than to live under him a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. . . And I presumed to tell him that the late usurpers that were over us so well understood their own interest, that to promote it they had found the way of doing good to be the most effectual means, and had placed and encouraged many thousand faithful ministers in the Church, even such as detested their usurpation. And so far had they attained their ends hereby, that it was the principal means of their interest in the people, and the good opinion that any had conceived of them. . . And that he would never suffer himself to be tempted to undo the good which Cromwell or any other had done, because they were usurpers that did it, or discountenance a faithful ministry because his enemies had set them up. But that he would rather outgo them in doing good, and opposing and rejecting the ignorant

and ungodly, of what opinion or party soever. For the people whose cause we recommend to him had their eyes on him as the officer of God, to defend them in the possession of the helps of their salvation; which if he were pleased to vouchsafe them, their estates and lives would cheerfully be offered to his service. . . . And again I humbly craved that no misrepresentations might cause him to believe that, because some fanatics have been factious and disloyal, therefore the religious people in his dominions, who are most careful of their souls, are such, though some of them may be dissatisfied about some forms and ceremonies in God's worship which others use. . . I told him also that it was not for Presbyterians or any party, as such, that we were speaking, but for the religious part of his subjects, as such; than whom no prince on earth had better; and how considerable part of the kingdom he would find them to be. . .

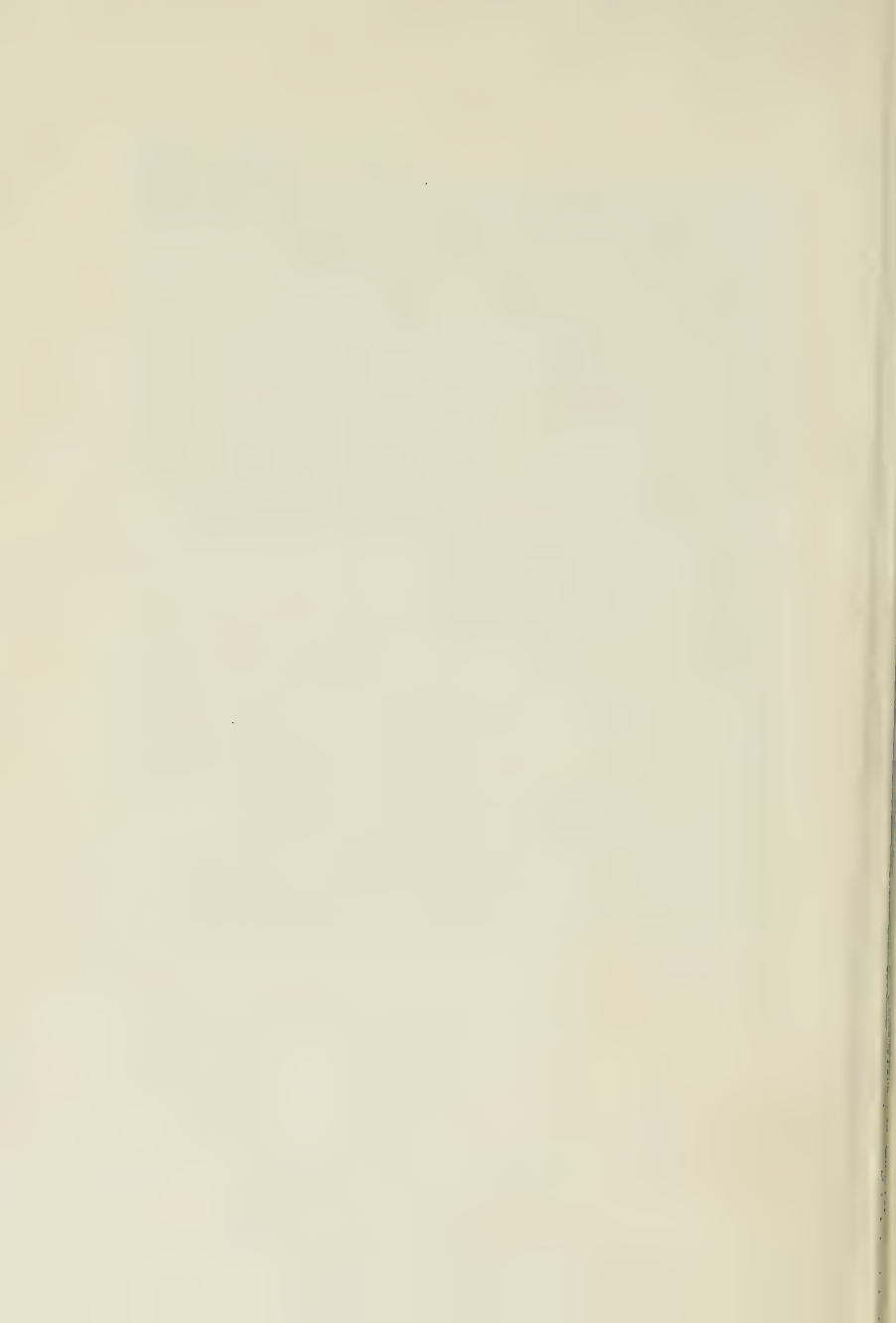
These, with some other such things, I then spake, when some of my brethren had spoken first. Mr. Simeon Ash also spake much to the same purpose, and of all our desires of his majesty's assistance in our desired union.

The king gave us not only a free audience, but as gracious an answer as we could expect: professing his gladness to hear our inclinations to agreement, and his resolution to do his part to bring us together; and that it must not be by bringing one party over to the other, but by abating somewhat on both sides, and meeting in the midway; and that if it were not accomplished, it should be long¹ of ourselves and not of him. Nay, that he was resolved to see it brought to pass, and that he would draw us together himself, with some more to this purpose. Insomuch that old Mr. Ash burst out into tears with joy, and could not forbear expressing what gladness this promise of his majesty had put into his heart.

¹ — because.



*From the Walker Painting in Rous Lench Court, Evesham.
(By courtesy of Mr. Jonathan Cape, the publisher of Dr. Powicke's "Life
of the Reverend Richard Baxter.")*



CHAPTER III

PROPOSALS FOR CHURCH-GOVERNMENT

Sion College—Roving discourses—"My lords"—Offer of a bishopric—St. Dunstan's panic.

1660-1661

EITHER at this time, or shortly after, the king required us to draw up and offer him such proposals as we thought meet, in order to agreement about church government, for that was the main difference; if that were agreed there would be little danger of differing in the rest. And he desired us to set down the most that we could yield to.

We told him that we were but a few men, and had no commission from any of our brethren to express their minds, and therefore desired that his majesty would give us leave to acquaint our brethren in the country with it, and take them with us. The king answered that that would be too long, and make too much noise, and therefore we should do what we would ourselves only, with such of the city as we would take with us. And when we then professed that we presumed not to give the sense of others nor oblige them, and that what we did must signify but the minds of so many men as were present, he answered that it should signify no more, and that he did not intend to call an assembly of the other party, but would bring a few, such as he thought meet; and that if he thought good to advise with a few of each side for his own satisfaction, none had cause to be offended at it. . .

Hereupon we departed and appointed to meet from day to day at Sion College, and to consult there openly with any of our brethren that would please to join with us, that none might say they were excluded. . .

In these debates we found the great inconvenience of too many actors (though there cannot be too many consenters to what is well done). For that which seemed the most convenient expression to one seemed inconvenient to another, and that we that all agreed in matter had much ado to agree in words. But after about two or three weeks'

time we drew up . . proposals which, with Archbishop Usher's form of government (called his *Reduction*, etc.), we should offer to the king. . . About discipline we designedly adhered to Bishop Usher's model without a word of alteration; that so they might have less to say against our offers as being our own; and that the world might see that it was *Episcopacy itself* which they refused; and that they contended against the archbishop as well as against us; and that we pleaded not at all with them for Presbytery, unless a moderate Episcopacy be Presbytery. Yet was there a faction that called this offer of Bishop Usher's Episcopacy by the name of the *Presbyterians' impudent expectations*. I also prevailed with our brethren to offer an abstract of our larger papers, lest the reading of the larger should seem tedious to the king. . . .

When we went with these foresaid papers to the king, and expected there to meet the divines of the other party, according to promise, with their proposals also containing the lowest terms which they could yield to for peace, we saw not a man of them, nor any papers from them of that nature, no, not to this day. But it was not fit for us to expostulate or complain.

But his majesty very graciously renewed his professions (I must not call them promises) that he would bring us together, and see that the bishops should come down and yield on their parts; and when he heard our papers read, he seemed well pleased with them, and told us he was glad that we were for a liturgy, and yielded to the *essence* of Episcopacy, and therefore he doubted not of our agreement, with much more; which we thought meet to recite in our following addresses by way of gratitude, and for other reasons easy to be conjectured.

Yet was not Bishop Usher's model the same in all points that we could wish. But it was the best that we could have the least hope (I say not to obtain, but) acceptably to make them any offers of. For had we proposed anything below bishops and archbishops, we should but have suddenly furnished them with plausible reasons for the rejecting of all further attempts of concord, or any other favour from them. . . .

While we waited for the promised condescensions of the Episcopal divines, there came nothing to us but a paper

of bitter oppositions by way of confutation of our former proposals. We were not insensible of the unworthiness of this dealing, and the brethren at first desired me to write an answer to it. But afterward they considered that this would but provoke them and turn a treaty for concord into a sharp disputation, which would increase the discord; and so what I had written was never seen by any man, lest it should hinder peace. . . .

Shortly after this, instead of the diocesans' concessions, it was told us that the king would put all that he thought meet to grant us into the form of a Declaration, and we should see it first and have liberty to give notice of what we liked not, as not consistent with the desired concord (and so the diocesans cannot be charged with any mutability as having ever granted us such abatements which after they receded from). We thankfully accepted of this offer, and received from the Lord Chancellor the . . . copy of the Declaration. . . .

When we had received this copy of the Declaration, we saw that it would not serve to heal our differences. Therefore we told the Lord Chancellor (with whom we were to do all our business still before it came as from us to the king) that our endeavours as to concord would all be frustrate if much were not altered in the Declaration (I pass over all our conferences with him, both now and at other times). In conclusion, we were to draw up our thoughts of it in writing, which the brethren imposed on me to do. My judgment was that all the fruit of this our treaty (besides a little reprieve from intended ejection) would be but the satisfying our consciences and posterity that we had done our duty, and that it was not our fault that we came not to the desired concord or coalition, and therefore, seeing we had no (considerable) higher hopes, we should speak as plainly as honesty and conscience did require us. But when Mr. Calamy and Dr. Reynolds had read my paper, they were troubled at the plainness of it, and thought it would never be endured, and therefore desired some alteration. . . . When they told me that it would not so much as be received, and that I must go with it myself, for nobody else would, I yielded to such an alteration. . . . It was only in the preface that the alteration was desired. . . .

A little before this the bishops' party had appointed (at

our request) a meeting with some of us, to try how near we could come in preparation to what was to be resolved on. Accordingly Dr. Morley, Dr. Henchman and Dr. Cosins met Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Calamy and myself; and after a few roving discourses we parted without bringing them to any particular concessions for abatement, only their general talk was, from the beginning, as if they would do anything for peace which was fit to be done, and they being at that time newly elect (but not consecrated) to their several bishoprics, we called them "my lords," which Dr. Morley once returned with such a passage as this, "We may call you also, I suppose, by the same title"; by which I perceived they had some purposes to try that way with us. . . .

After all this a day was appointed for his majesty to peruse the Declaration as it was drawn up by the Lord Chancellor, and to allow what he liked and alter the rest, upon the hearing of what both sides should say. Accordingly he came to the Lord Chancellor's house. . . The business of the day was not to dispute, but, as the Lord Chancellor read over < the > Declaration, each party was to speak to what they disliked, and the king to determine how it should be as liked himself. . . The great matter which we stopped at was the word "consent," where the bishop is to confirm by the "consent" of the pastor of that church; and the king would by no means pass the word "consent" either there or in the point of ordination or censures, because it gave the ministers a negative voice. We urged him hard with a passage in his father's book of meditations, where he expressly granteth this "consent" of the presbyters; but it would not prevail. . . .

But Bishop Morley told them how great our power was, and what we might do if we were willing; and he told the king that no man had written better of these matters than I had done, and there my *Five Disputations of Church Government*, etc., lay ready to be produced; and all was to intimate as if I now contradicted what I had there written. I told him that I had best reason to know what I had written, and that I am still of the same mind, and stand to it all, and do not speak anything against it. A great many words there were about prelacy and re-ordination, Dr. Gunning and Bishop Morley speaking almost

all on one side (and Dr. Henchman and Dr. Cosins sometimes), and Mr. Calamy and myself most on the other side. . . .

The most of the time being spent thus in speaking to particulars of the Declaration as it was read, when we came to the end the Lord Chancellor drew out another paper, and told us that the king had been petitioned also by the Independents and Anabaptists, and though he knew not what to think of it himself, and did not very well like it, yet something he had drawn up which he would read to us, and desire us also to give our advice about it. Thereupon he read, as an addition to the Declaration, that "others also be permitted to meet for religious worship, so be it they do it not to the disturbance of the peace; and that no justice of peace or officer disturb them." When he had read it, he again desired them all to think on it, and give their advice. But all were silent. The Presbyterians all perceived, as soon as they heard it, that it would secure the liberty of the Papists; and one of them whispered me in the ear and entreated me to say nothing, for it was an odious business, but let the bishops speak to it. But the bishops would not speak a word, nor any one of the Presbyterians neither, and so we were like to have ended in that silence. I knew if we consented to it it would be charged on us that we spake for a toleration of Papists and sectaries. (But yet it might have lengthened out our own.) And if we spake against it, all sects and parties would be set against us, as the causers of their sufferings, and as a partial people that would have liberty ourselves, but would have no others have it with us. At last, seeing the silence continue, I thought our very silence would be charged on us a consent if it went on, and therefore I only said this, that "this reverend brother, Dr. Gunning, even now speaking against sects, had named the Papists and the Socinians. For our parts we desired not favour to ourselves alone, and rigorous severity we desired against none. As we humbly thanked his majesty for his indulgence to ourselves, so we distinguish the tolerable parties from the intolerable. For the former, we humbly crave just lenity and favour; but for the latter, such as the two sorts named before by that reverend brother, for our parts we cannot make their toleration our

request." To which his majesty said that "There were laws enough against the Papists"; and I replied that "We understood the question to be, whether those laws should be executed on them or not." And so his majesty broke up the meeting of that day. And here you may note by the way the fashion of these times and the state of the Presbyterians. Any man that was for a spiritual, serious way of worship (though he were for moderate Episcopacy and liturgy), and that lived according to his profession, was called commonly a Presbyterian, as formerly he was called a Puritan, unless he joined himself to Independents, Anabaptists, or some other sect which might afford him a more odious name. And of the lords, he that was for Episcopacy and the liturgy was called a Presbyterian if he endeavoured to procure any abatement of their impositions, for the reconciling of the parties or the ease of the ministers and people that disliked them. And of the ministers, he was called a Presbyterian that was for Episcopacy and liturgy, if he conformed not so far as to subscribe or swear to the English diocesan frame and all their impositions. I knew not of any one lord at court that was a Presbyterian; yet were the Earl of Manchester (a good man) and the Earl of Anglesey, and the Lord Hollis, called Presbyterians, and as such appointed to direct and help them, when I have heard them plead for moderate Episcopacy and liturgy myself; and they would have drawn us to yield further than we did. . . .

When I went out from the meeting on October 22, I went dejected, as being fully satisfied that the form of government in that Declaration would not be satisfactory, nor attain that concord which was our end, because the pastors had no government of the flocks; and I was resolved to meddle no more in the business, but patiently suffer with other Dissenters. But two or three days after I met the king's Declaration cried about the streets, and I presently stepped into a house to read it, and seeing the word "consent" put in about confirmation and sacrament, though not as to jurisdiction, and seeing the "pastoral persuasive power" of governing left to all the ministers with the rural dean, and some more amendments, I wondered at it how it came to pass, but was exceeding glad of it, as perceiving that now

the terms were (though not such as we desired, yet) such as any sober, honest ministers might submit to. And I was presently resolved to do my best to persuade all, according to my interest and opportunity, to conform according to the terms of this Declaration, and cheerfully to promote the concord of the Church, and brotherly love which this concord doth bespeak.

Having frequent business with the Lord Chancellor about other matters (of which somewhat anon), I was going to him when I met the king's Declaration in the street, and I was so much pleased with it that (having told him why I was so earnest to have had it suited to the desired end) I gave him hearty thanks for the additions, and told him that if (1) the liturgy may be but altered, as the Declaration promiseth; (2) and this may be settled and continued to us by a law, and not reversed, I should take it to be my duty to do my best to procure the full consent of others, and promote our happy concord on these terms, and should rejoice to see the day that factions and parties may all be swallowed up in unity, and contentions turned to brotherly love. At that time he began to offer me a bishopric (of which more anon). . . .

A little before the meeting about the king's Declaration, Colonel Birch came to me as from the Lord Chancellor, to persuade me to take the Bishopric of Hereford (for he had bought the bishop's house at Whitburne, and thought to make a better bargain with me than with another, and therefore, finding that the Lord Chancellor intended me the offer of one, he desired it might be that). I thought it best to give them no positive denial till I saw the utmost of their intents. And I perceived that Col. Birch came privately that a bishopric might not be publicly refused, and to try whether I would accept it that else it might not be offered me; for he told me that they would not bear such a repulse. I told him that I was resolved never to be Bishop of Hereford, and that I did not think that I should ever see cause to take any bishopric, but I could give no positive answer till I saw the king's resolutions about the way of church-government. For if the old diocesan frame continued, he knew we could never accept or own it. After this (having not a flat denial) he came again and again to Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Calamy and myself together, to

importune us all to accept the offer (for the Bishopric of Norwich was offered Dr. Reynolds, and Coventry and Lichfield to Mr. Calamy). But he had no positive answer, but the same from me as before. At last, the day that the king's Declaration came out, when I was with the Lord Chancellor (who did all), he asked me whether I would accept of a bishopric. I told them . . . if his lordship would procure us the settlement of the matter of that Declaration by passing it into a law, I promised him to take that way in which I might most serve the public peace.

Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Calamy and myself had some speeches oft together about it; and we all thought that a bishopric might be accepted according to the description of the Declaration without any violation of the Covenant, or owning the ancient prelacy; but all the doubt was whether this Declaration would be made a law (as was then expected) or whether it were but a temporary means to draw us on till we came up to all the diocesans desired; and Mr. Calamy desired that we might all go together, and all refuse or all accept it. . . .

For my own part I resolved against it at the first, but not as a thing which I judged unlawful in itself, as described in the king's Declaration. But (1) I knew that it would take me off my writing; (2) I looked to have most of the godly ministers cast out, and what good could be done upon ignorant, vile, incapable men? (3) I feared that this Declaration was but for a present use, and that shortly it would be revoked or nullified; (4) and if so, I doubted not but the laws would prescribe such work for bishops, in silencing ministers, and troubling honest Christians for their consciences, and ruling the vicious with greater lenity, etc., as that I had rather have the meanest employment amongst men; (5) and my judgment was fully resolved against the lawfulness of the old diocesan frame. . . .

To Mr. Calamy I would give no counsel, but for Dr. Reynolds I persuaded him to accept it, so be it he would publicly declare that he took it but on the terms of the king's Declaration, and would lay it down when he could no longer exercise it on those terms; only I left it to his consideration whether it be better to stay till we see what they will do with the Declaration; and for myself, I was confident I should see cause to refuse it.

When I came next to the Lord Chancellor (the next day save one) he asked me of my resolution, and put me to it so suddenly that I was forced to delay no longer, but told him that I could not accept it for several reasons; and it was not the least that I thought I could better serve the Church without it, if he would but prosecute the establishment of the terms granted. . . .

Mr. Calamy blamed me for giving in my denial alone, before we had resolved together what to do. But I told him the truth: that being upon other necessary business with the Lord Chancellor, he put me to it on the sudden so that I could not conveniently delay my answer.

And Dr. Reynolds almost as suddenly accepted it, saying, "That some friend had taken out the *congé d'élire* for him without his knowledge." But he read to me a profession directed to the king, which he had written, wherein he professed that he took a bishop and presbyter to differ not *ordine* but *gradu*, and that a bishop was but the chief presbyter, and that he was not to ordain or govern but with his presbyters' assistance and consent, and that thus he accepted of the place, and as described in the king's Declaration, and not as it stood before in England, and that he would no longer hold or exercise it than he could do it on these terms. To this sense it was; and he told me that he would offer it the king when he accepted of the place; but whether he did or not I cannot tell. He died in the Bishopric of Norwich *an.* 1676.

On Friday, November 2, being All Souls' Day, the queen came in. And there were that day on the Thames three tides in about twelve hours, to the common admiration of the people.

Mr. Calamy long suspended his answer, so that that bishopric was long undisposed of; till he saw the issue of all our treaty, which easily resolved him. . . .

When the king's Declaration was passed, we had a meeting with the ministers of London called Presbyterian (that is, all that were neither prelatical nor of any other sect), to consult with them about their returning thanks to the king for his gracious Declaration; that so it might appear that those that were not with us were thankful for it as well as we. At the first meeting, the city ministers first voted their thanks to be given to us for our labours

in procuring it, *nemine contradicente*. But old Mr. Arthur Jackson (a very worthy man) and Mr. Crofton spake against returning thanks to the king. Not that they were not truly thankful, but because their thanks would signify an approbation of bishops and archbishops, which they had covenanted against. This I undertook to confute, by proving that the bishops and archbishops in the king's Declaration are not *ejusdem speciei* with what they were before; and that there is the same name but not the same thing; and withal by proving that the Covenant did not meddle against all bishops and archbishops, but only those of the English diocesan species; and that there was a specifical difference, I proved, in that by the king's Declaration the essentials at least of church-government are restored to the pastors, whereas before the pastors had no government; and this altereth all the frame, as much as if you let the foundation-walls and roof of your house stand, and all that is visible without, but within you pull down the partitions and turn it into a church. . . .

Whether this came to the king's ears, or what else it was that caused it, I know not, but presently after the Earl of Lauderdale came to tell me that I must come the next day to the king; who was pleased to tell me that he sent for me only to signify his favour to me. I told him I feared my plain speeches Octob. 22, which I thought that cause in hand commanded me, might have been displeasing to him. But he told me that he was not offended at the plainness or freedom or earnestness of them, but only when he thought I was not in the right; and that for my free speech he took me to be the honestest man.

I suppose this favour came from the bishops, who, having notice of what last passed, did think that now I might serve their interests. . . .

Yet I think that those men are reprobable who say that nothing but deceit and juggling was from the beginning intended. For who knoweth other men's intents but God? Charity requireth us to think that they speak nearer to the truth who say that while the diocesan doctors were at Breda they little dreamt that their way to their highest grandeur was so fair, and therefore that then they would have been glad of the terms of the Declaration of Breda; and that when they came in it was necessary that they should

proceed safely, and feel whether the ground were solid under them before they proceeded to their structure. . . .

I am next to insert some businesses of my own which fell in at this same time. When I had refused a bishopric, I did it on such reasons as offended not the Lord Chancellor; and therefore instead of it I presumed to crave his favour to restore me to preach to my people at Kidderminster again, from whence I had been cast out (when many hundreds of others were ejected) upon the restoration of all them that had been sequestered. . . . Some laughed at me for refusing a bishopric, and petitioning to be a reading vicar's curate. But I had little hopes of so good a condition, at least for any considerable time.

The ruler of the vicar and all the business there was Sir Ralph Clare, an old man and an old courtier, who carried it towards me all the time I was there with great civility and respect, and sent me a purse of money when I went away (but I refused it). But his zeal against all that scrupled ceremonies, or that would not preach for prelacy and Conformity, etc., was so much greater than his respects to me, that he was the principal cause of my removal (though he has not owned it to this day). I suppose he thought that when I was far enough off he could so far rule the town as to reduce the people to his way. . . .

About the same time about twenty or two-and-twenty furious fanatics, called Fifth Monarchy Men (one Venner, a wine-cooper, and his church that he preached unto), being transported with enthusiastic pride, did rise up in arms and fought in the streets like madmen against all that stood in their way, till they were some killed and the rest taken, judged and executed. . . .

And here I will interpose a short account of my public ministry in London. Being removed from my ancient flock in Worcestershire, and yet being uncertain whether I might return to them or not, I refused to take any other charge, but preached up and down London (for nothing), according as I was invited. When I had done thus above a year, I thought a fixed place was better, and so I joined with Dr. Bates at St. Dunstan's in the West, in Fleet Street, and preached once a week, for which the people allowed me some maintenance. . . .

The congregations being crowded was that which

provoked envy to accuse me. And one day the crowd did drive me from my place. It fell out that at Dunstan's Church in the midst of sermon, a little lime and dust (and perhaps a piece of a brick or two) fell down in the steeple or belfry near the boys, which put the whole congregation into sudden melancholy, so that they thought that the steeple and church were falling; which put them all into so confused a haste to get away, that indeed the noise of the feet in the galleries sounded like the falling of the stones; so that the people crowded out of doors; the women left some of them a scarf and some a shoe behind them, and some in the galleries cast themselves down upon those below, because they could not get down the stairs. I sate still down in the pulpit, seeing and pitying their vain distemper, and as soon as I could be heard I intreated their silence and went on. The people were no sooner quieted and got in again, and the auditory composed, but some that stood upon a wainscot-bench near the Communion-table brake the bench with their weight, so that the noise renewed the fear again, and they were worse disordered than before; so that one old woman was heard at the church door asking forgiveness of God for not taking the first warning, and promising, if God would deliver her this once, she would take heed of coming thither again. When they were again quieted I went on. But the church having before an ill name (as very old and rotten and dangerous), this put the parish upon a resolution to pull down all the roof and build it better, which they have done with so great reparation of the walls and steeple that it is now like a new church, and much more commodious for the hearers. . . .

Upon this reparation of Dunstan's Church, I preached out my quarter at Bride's Church, in the other end of Fleet Street; where the Common Prayer being used by the curate before sermon, I occasioned abundance to be at Common Prayer which before avoided it. .

On the week-days Mr. Ashurst, with about twenty more citizens, desired me to preach a lecture in Milk Street, for which they allowed me forty pounds per annum, which I continued near a year, till we were all silenced. And at the same time I preached once every Lord's-day at Blackfriars (where Mr. Gibbons, a judicious man, was minister).

. . At these two churches I ended the course of my public ministry (unless God cause an undeserved resurrection). . .

Before this I resolved to go to the Archbishop of Canterbury (then Bishop of London) to ask him for his licence to preach in his diocese. . . The Archbishop received me with very great expression of respects; and offered me his licence, and would let his secretary take no money of me. But he offered me the book to subscribe in. I told him that he knew that the king's Declaration exempted us from subscription. He bid me write what I would. I told him that what I resolved to do, and I thought meet for him to expect, I would do of choice, though I might forbear. And so (in Latin) I subscribed my promise not to preach against the doctrine of the Church, or the ceremonies established by law, in his diocese while I used his licence. . . .

On April 23 was his majesty's coronation day; the day being very serene and fair, till suddenly in the afternoon, as they were returning from Westminster Hall, there was very terrible thunders when none expected it. Which made me remember his father's coronation, on which, being a boy at school, and having leave to play for the solemnity, an earthquake (about two o'clock in the afternoon) did affright the boys and all the neighbourhood. I intend no commentary on these, but only to relate the matter of fact.

CHAPTER IV

THE SAVOY CONFERENCE

*Baxter's "Reformed Liturgy"—Book of Common Prayer—
Its disorder and defectiveness—General comments on
the bishops.*

1661-1662

To return at last to our treaty with the bishops. If you observe the king's Declaration you will find that though matters of government seemed to be determined, yet the liturgy was to be reviewed and reformed, and new forms drawn up in Scripture phrase suited to the several parts of worship, that men might use which of them they pleased (as already there were some such variety of forms in some offices of that book). This was yet to be done, and till this were done we were uncertain of the issue of all our treaty; but if that were done, and all settled by law, our divisions were at an end. Therefore, being often with the Lord Chancellor on the forementioned occasions, I humbly intreated him to hasten the finishing of that work, that we might rejoice in our desired concord. At last Dr. Reynolds and Mr. Calamy were authorised to name the persons on that side to manage the treaty; and a commission was granted under the Broad Seal to the persons nominated on both sides. I intreated Mr. Calamy and Dr. Reynolds to leave me out, for though I much desired the expedition of the work, I found that the last debates had made me unacceptable with my superiors; and this would much more increase it, and other men might be fitter who were less distasted. But I could not prevail with them. . . .

A meeting was appointed, and the Savoy (the Bishop of London's lodgings) named by them for the place. . . . The Commission being read, the Archbishop of York (a peaceable man) spake first, and told us that he knew nothing of the business, but perhaps the Bishop of London knew more of the king's mind in it, and therefore was fitter to speak in it than he. The Bishop of London told us that it was not they but we that had been the seekers of this Conference, and that desired alterations in the liturgy; and therefore they had nothing to say or do till we brought

in all that we had to say against it in writing, and all the additional forms and alterations which we desired. Our brethren were very much against this motion, and urged the king's Commission, which requireth us to "meet together, advise and consult." They told him that by conference we might perceive as we went what each would yield to, and might more speedily despatch, and probably attain our end; whereas writing would be a tedious, endless business, and we should not have that familiarity and acquaintance with each other's minds which might facilitate our concord. But the Bishop of London resolutely insisted on it not to do anything till we brought in all our exceptions, alterations and additions at once. In this I confess, above all things else, I was wholly of his mind, and prevailed with my brethren to consent; but I conjecture upon contrary reasons. . . .

When we were withdrawn it pleased our brethren presently to divide the undertaken work. The drawing up of exceptions against the Common Prayer they undertook themselves, and were to meet from day to day for that end. The drawing up of the additions or new forms they imposed upon me alone, because I had been guilty of that design from the beginning, and of engaging them in that piece of service (and some of them thought it would prove odious to the Independents, and others who are against a liturgy as such). Hereupon I departed from them, and came among them no more till I had finished my task (which was a fortnight's time). My leisure was too short for the doing of it with that accurateness which a business of that nature doth require, or for the consulting with men or authors. I could not have time to make use of any book save the Bible and my Concordance (comparing all with the Assembly's Directory and the Book of Common Prayer and Hamon L'Estrange). And at the fortnight's end I brought it to the other commissioners. . . .

When I brought my draft to the brethren I found them but entering on their work of exceptions against the Common Prayer, and so I was fain to lay by mine above a fortnight longer till their work was done, in which divers of them took their parts. . . . From the beginning I told them that I was not of their mind who charged the Common Prayer with false doctrine, or idolatry, or false worship in

the matter or substance, nor that took it to be a worship which a Christian might not lawfully join in when he had not liberty and ability for better. And that I always took the faults of the Common Prayer to be chiefly disorder and defectiveness; and so that it was a true worship, though imperfect; and imperfection was the charge that we had against it (considered as distinct from the ceremonies and discipline). . . And I think this was the mind of all our brethren, save one, as well as mine. . .

When the exceptions against the liturgy were finished, the brethren oft read over the reformed liturgy which I offered them. At first they would have had no rubric or directory, but bare prayers, because they thought our commission allowed it not. Then, at last, they yielded to the reasons which I gave them, and resolved to take them in, but first to offer the bishops their exceptions. . . .

When we came to our debates I first craved of them their animadversions on our additions and alterations of the liturgy, which we had put in long before; and that they would tell us what they allowed or disallowed in them, that we might have the use of them according to the words in the king's Declaration and Commission. But they would not by any importunity be intreated at all to debate that, nor to give any of their opinions about those papers. . . .

When I begged their compassion on the souls of their brethren, and that they would not unnecessarily cast so many out of the ministry and their communion, Bishop Cosins told me that we threatened them with numbers, and for his part he thought the king should do well to make us name them all. A charitable and wise motion! to name all the thousands of England that dissented from them, and that had sworn the Covenant, and whom they would after persecute. . . .

Among all the bishops there was none who had so promising a face as Dr. Sterne, the Bishop of Carlisle. He looked so honestly, and gravely and soberly, that I scarce thought such a face could have deceived me; and when I was intreating them not to cast out so many of their brethren through the *nation* as scrupled a ceremony which they confessed indifferent, he turned to the rest of the reverend bishops and noted me for saying "in the nation." "He will not say 'in the kingdom,'" saith he, "lest he own a

king." This was all that ever I heard that worthy prelate say. But with grief I told him that half the charity which became so grave a bishop might have sufficed to have helped him to a better exposition of the word "nation"; from the mouths of such who have so lately taken the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and sworn fidelity to the king as his chaplains, and had such testimonies from him as we have had; and that our case was sad if we could plead by the king's Commission for accommodation upon no better terms than to be noted as traitors every time we used such a word as the "nation," which all monarchical writers use. . . .

They told us of the antiquity of liturgies. And I earnestly intreated them to let true antiquity be imitated by them; and desired any of them to prove that ever any prince did impose one form of prayer or liturgy, for uniformity, on all the churches in his dominions. Yea, or upon any one province or country under them. Or that ever any council, synod or patriarchs, or metropolitans, did impose one liturgy on all the bishops and churches under them. I proved to them not only from the instances of Basil and the Church of Neocaesarea, but others, that every bishop then chose what forms he pleased for his own church. They could deny none of all this; but antiquity is nothing to them when it makes against them. . . .

By this time, our frequent crossing of their expectations, I saw, had made some of the bishops angry; above all Bishop Morley, who overruled the whole business, and did interest himself in it deeplier than the rest, and was of a hotter spirit and a readier tongue. But that which displeased them most was the freedom of my speeches to them; that is, that I spoke to them as on terms of equality as to the cause, yet with all honourable titles to their persons. For I perceived that they had that eminency of power and interest that the greatest lords were glad of their favour, did expect that the presence of so many of them should have awed us into such a silence, or cowardliness, as should have betrayed our cause, or at least that their vehemency and passions and interruptions should have put us out of countenance. . . .

But the very truth is, I perceived so little compassion to souls in the zealous and swaying managers of these

controversies, and so little regard of the scruples and tenderness of godly people who were afraid of sinning, as that I scarce thought among Protestants there had been any such. Whether they would have abated one ceremony if they had had an hundred more, to keep all the Dissenters in three nations from being cast out of the ministry and Church, I know not; but of those they have they would not abate one; which made me oft think that their spirits are much more like the Papists' than their formal worship and discipline is; so much do they agree in destroying men for their opinions' and ceremonies' sake, and in building the tombs of the prophets and over-honouring the dead saints, while they go on to hate and destroy the living. . . .

<They> said that I sought to make them odious by representing them as cruel and persecutors, as if they intended to silence and cast out so many. And it was one of the greatest matters of offence against me that I foreknew and foretold them what they were about to do. They said that this was but to stir up the fears of the people, and cause them to disaffect the government, by talking of silencing us and casting out the people from communion. I told them that either they do intend such a course or not. If they do, why should they think us criminal for knowing it? If not, what need had we of all these disputes with them? which were only to persuade them not to cast out the ministers and the people on these accounts. And it was but a few weeks after this that Bishop Morley himself did silence me, forbidding me to preach in his diocese, who now took it so heinously that I did foretell it. . . . So unanimous are all men that have ill designs in going the same way to their accomplishment, and so dangerous is it to foreknow what cruel men are about to do. . . .

Hereupon we fell again upon the point of charity and compassion to the Church, and their frustrating the king's Commission and the kingdom's hopes. And when they professed their desires of the Church's peace, I told them they would not abate the smallest thing nor correct their grossest errors for it. And hereupon I read over to them the preface (drawn up by Mr. Calamy) before our reply to their answer to our exceptions against the liturgy, which, reciting their corruptions and showing their unpeaceableness, offended but silenced them.

By this time the evening of our last day was far gone; and I desired to know of them whether we should continue our dispute any further, as private men, voluntarily among ourselves; for I had many more arguments, which I desired before to have read all at once but could not be permitted. Or whether they would receive my arguments and the reply which I last read. Dr. Pearson resolved that he would meddle no more after that night. Bishop Morley said he thought it unfit when the king's Commission was expired that we should meddle in it any farther. But Dr. Gunning and I had so much mind to it (for I knew that almost all my arguments were yet behind, and it was a cause that might easily be made very plain) that I told him I would venture on the danger for the love of charity and peace, and he agreed that I should send him in all my arguments with the last reply (which he had not answered) the next day.

Lastly, I desired Bishop Morley to resolve us what account we were jointly to give his majesty of our proceedings, that we might not wrong each other. And by his and their consent it was agreed on that we give nothing in our account to the king as charged on one another but what is delivered in by the party in writing. And that all our account was to be this: That we were all agreed on the ends, for the Church's welfare, unity and peace, and his majesty's happiness and contentment, but, after all our debates, were disagreed of the means. And this was the end of that Assembly and Commission.

As soon as we were gone I delivered my papers to a scribe to be transcribed. And about eight o'clock or nine, just as I was entering the door of my lodging, Dr. Gunning's messenger comes to me to tell me that, upon further consideration, he should receive no more papers from me after that day, and so our farther trouble was prevented. . . .

And thus our dispute at the Savoy ended, and with it our endeavours for reconciliation upon the warrant of the king's Commission.

Were it not a thing in which an historian so much concerned in the business is apt to be suspected of partiality, I would here annex a character of each one that managed this business as they showed themselves. But because it hath that inconvenience I will omit it, only telling you what *part* each one of them acted in all this work.

The Bishop of London (since Archbishop of Canterbury) only appeared the first day of each conference (which, besides that before the king, was but twice in all as I remember), and meddled not at all in any disputations. But all men supposed that he and Bishop Morley (and next Bishop Henchman) were the doers and disposers of all such affairs. The Archbishop of York spake no more than I have told you, and came but once or twice in all. Bishop Morley was oft there, but not constantly, and with free and fluent words, with much earnestness, was the chief speaker of all the bishops, and the greatest interrupter of us; vehemently going on with what he thought serviceable to his end, and bearing down answers by the said fervour and interruptions. Bishop Cosins was there constantly, and had a great deal of talk with so little logic, natural or artificial, that I perceived no one much moved by anything he said. But two virtues he showed (though none took him for a magician): one was that he was excellently well versed in Canons, Councils and Fathers, which he remembered when, by citing of any passages, we tried him. The other was that as he was of a rustic wit and carriage, so he would endure more freedom of our discourse with him, and was more affable and familiar than the rest. Bishop Henchman (since Bishop of London) was of the most grave, comely, reverend aspect of any of them, and of a good insight in the Fathers and Councils; Cosins and he and Dr. Gunning being all that showed any of that skill among us considerable, in which they are all three of very laudable understandings, and better than any other of either of the parties that I met with. And Bishop Henchman spoke calmly and slowly, and not very oft, but was as high in his principles and resolutions as any of them.

Bishop Sanderson of Lincoln was some time there, but never spake that I know of but what I have told you before. But his great learning and worth are known by his labours, and his aged peevishness not unknown.

Bishop Gauden was our most constant helper. He and Bishop Cosins seldom were absent. And how bitter soever his pen be, he was the only moderator of all the bishops (except our Bishop Reynolds). He showed no logic, nor meddled in any dispute or point of learning; but a calm, fluent, rhetorical tongue. And if all had been of his mind,

we had been reconciled. But when, by many days' conference in the beginning, we had got some moderating concessions from him (and from Bishop Cosins by his means), the rest came in the end and brake them all. . . .

Bishop Sterne of Carlisle, since Archbishop of York, was of a most sober, honest, mortified aspect, but spake nothing that I know of but that weak, uncharitable word before mentioned, so that I was never more deceived by a man's face.

Bishop Reynolds spake much the first day for bringing them to abatements and moderation. And afterwards he sate with them, and spake now and then a word for moderation. He was a solid, honest man, but through mildness and excess of timorous reverence to great men, altogether unfit to contend with them.

Mr. Thorndike spoke once a few impertinent passionate words, confuting the opinion which we had received of him from his first writings, and confirming that which his second and last writings had given us of him. . . .

Dr. Pearson and Dr. Gunning did all their work (beside Bishop Morley's discourses), but with great difference in the manner. Dr. Pearson was their true logician and disputant, without whom, as far as I could discern, we should have had nothing from them but Dr. Gunning's passionate invectives mixed with some argumentations. He disputed accurately, soberly and calmly (being but once in any passion), breeding in us a great respect for him, and a persuasion that if he had been independent he would have been for peace; and that if all were in his power, it would have gone well. He was the strength and honour of that cause which we doubted whether he heartily maintained.

Dr. Gunning was their forwardest and greatest speaker; understanding well what belonged to a disputant; a man of greater study and industry than any of them, well read in Fathers and Councils, and of a ready tongue (and I hear and believe of a very temperate life, as to all carnal excesses whatsoever); but so vehement for his high imposing principles, and so over-zealous for Arminianism and formality and church-pomp, and so very eager and fervent in his discourse, that I conceive his prejudice and passion much perverted his judgment, and I am sure they made him lamentably overrun himself in his discourses. . . .

On our part, Dr. Bates spake very solidly, judiciously and pertinently when he spake. And for myself, the reason why I spake so much was because it was the desire of my brethren, and I was loth to expose *them* to the hatred of the bishops. . . And I thought it a cause that I could comfortably suffer for, and should as willingly be a martyr for *charity* as for *faith*. . . .

When we showed our paper to the Lord Chancellor (which the brethren had desired me to draw up, and had consented to without any alteration), he was not pleased with some passages in it, which he thought too pungent or pressing; but would not bid us put them out. So we went with it to the Lord Chamberlain (who had heard from the Lord Chancellor about it), and I read it to him also, and he was earnest with us to blot out some passages as too vehement, and such as would not well be borne. I was very loth to leave them out, but Sir Gilbert Gerrard (an ancient godly man) being with him, and of the same mind, I yielded (having no remedy, and being unmeet to oppose their wisdoms any further). And so what they scored under we left out, and presented the rest to his majesty afterwards. But when we came to present it, the Earl of Manchester secretly told the rest that if Dr. Reynolds, Dr. Bates and Dr. Manton would deliver it, it would be the more acceptable (intimating that I was grown unacceptable at court). But they would not go without me, and he professed he desired not my exclusion. But when they told me of it I took my leave of him, and was going away. But he and they came after me to the stairs and importuned me to return, and I went with them to take my farewell of this service. . . The occasion was a short speech which I made to inform his majesty how far we were agreed with the bishops, and wherein the difference did not lie, as in the points of loyalty, obedience, church-order, etc. This Dr. Manton also spake. And the king put the question, "But who shall be judge?" And I answered him that judgment is either public or private. Private judgment called *discretionis*, which is but the use of my reason to conduct my actions, belongeth to every private rational man. Public judgment is ecclesiastical or civil, and belongeth accordingly to the ecclesiastical governors (or pastors) and the civil, and not to any private man. And this was the end of these affairs. . . .

CHAPTER V

"THIS FATAL DAY"

Silenced—A sorrowful farewell—Calumny—Marriage—The monster of Milan—Act of Uniformity—Divisions among Nonconformists.

1662

AND now our calamities began to be much greater than before. We were called all by the name of Presbyterians (the odious name), though we never put up one petition for Presbytery, but pleaded for Primitive Episcopacy. We were represented in the common talk of those who thought it their interest to be our adversaries as the most seditious people, unworthy to be used like men or to enjoy our common liberty among them. . . .

Shortly after our disputation at the Savoy I went to Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire, and preached there but once, upon Matt. xxii. 12, "And he was speechless," where I spoke not a word that was any nearer kin to sedition, or that had any greater tendency to provoke them, than by showing "that wicked men, and the refusers of grace, however they may now have many things to say to excuse their sin, will at last be speechless, and dare not stand to their wickedness before God." Yet did the Bishop of Worcester tell me, when he silenced me, that the Bishop of London had showed him letters from one of the hearers assuring him that I preached seditiously. . . . As Seneca saith, "He that hath an ulcer crieth 'Oh!' if he do but think you touched him."

Shortly after my return to London I went into Worcestershire, to try whether it were possible to have any honest terms from the reading vicar there, that I might preach to my former flock. But when I had preached twice or thrice, he denied me liberty to preach any more. I offered him to take my lecture, which he was bound to allow me (under a bond of £500), but he refused it; I next offered him to

be his curate, and he refused it; I next offered him to preach for nothing, and he refused it; and lastly, I desired leave but once to administer the Sacrament to the people and preach my farewell sermon to them, but he would not consent. At last I understood that he was directed by his superiors to do what he did. But Mr. Baldwin (an able preacher whom I left there) was yet permitted.

At that time, my aged father lying in great pain of the stone and strangury, I went to visit him (twenty miles further). And while I was there Mr. Baldwin came to me, and told me that he also was forbidden to preach. We returned both to Kidderminster, and having a lecture at Shifnal in the way, I preached there, and stayed not to hear the evening sermon, because I would make haste to the bishop. It fell out that my turn at another lecture was on the same day with that at Shifnal (viz. at Cleobury, in Shropshire also). And many were there met in expectation to hear me. But a company of soldiers were there (as the country thought, to have apprehended me), who shut the doors against the ministers that would have preached in my stead (bringing a command to the churchwarden to hinder anyone that had not a licence from the bishop); and the poor people that had come from far were fain to go home with grieved hearts.

The next day it was confidently reported that a certain knight offered the bishop his troop to apprehend me if I offered to preach. And the people dissuaded me from going to the bishop, supposing my liberty in danger. But I went that morning with Mr. Baldwin, and in the hearing of him and Dr. Warmestry, then Dean of Worcester, I remembered the bishop of his promise to grant me his licence, etc., but he refused me liberty to preach in his diocese, though I offered him to preach only on the Creed and the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments, catechistical principles, and only to such as had no preaching. . . .

Having parted with my dear flock (I need not say with mutual sense and tears), I left Mr. Baldwin to live privately among them and oversee them in my stead, and visit them from house to house; advising them, notwithstanding all the injuries they had received, and all the failings of the ministers that preached to them, and the defects of the present way of worship, that yet they should keep to the



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public assemblies and make use of such helps as might be had in public, together with their private helps. . . .

Dr. Boreman of Trinity College wrote a book, without his name, and had no other design in it than to make me odious. . . . But to make up the matter, he writeth that it is reported that I killed a man in cold blood with my own hands in the wars. Whereas God knoweth that I never hurt a man in my life, no, never gave a man a stroke (save one man, when I was a boy, whose leg I broke with wrestling in jest, which almost broke my heart with grief, though he was quickly cured). . . .

And so vehement was the endeavour in court, city and country to make me contemptible and odious, as if the authors had thought that the safety either of Church or State did lie upon it, and all would have been safe if I were but vilified and hated. . . . Thus have I found the old saying true, that reconcilers use¹ to be hated on both sides, and to put their hand in the cleft, which closeth upon them and finisheth them. . . .

And though through the great mercy of God I had long been learning not to overvalue the thoughts of men, no, not so much as the reputation of honesty or innocency, yet I was somewhat wearied with this kind of life, to be every day calumniated and hear new slanders raised of me, and court and country ring of that which no man ever mentioned to my face; and I was oft thinking to go beyond sea, that I might find some place in retired privacy to live and end my days in quietness, out of the noise of a peace-hating generation. But my acquaintance thought I might be more serviceable here, though there I might live more in quietness; and having not the vulgar language of any country to enable me to preach to them or converse with them, and being so infirm as not to be like to bear the voyage and change of air, these, with other impediments which God laid in my way, hindered me from putting my thoughts in execution.

About this time also it was famed at the court that I was married, which went as the matter of a most heinous crime, which I never heard charged by them on any man but on me. Bishop Morley divulged it with all the odium he could possibly put upon it: telling them that once in

¹ = are accustomed.

conference with him I said that ministers' marriage is "lawful, and but ¹ lawful," as if I were now contradicting myself. And it everywhere rung about, partly as a wonder and partly as a crime, whilst they cried, "This is the man of charity," little knowing what they talked of. Insomuch that at last the Lord Chancellor told me he heard I was married, and wondered at it, when I told him it was not true. For they had affirmed it near a year before it came to pass. And I think the king's marriage was scarce more talked of than mine.

All this while Mr. Calamy and some other ministers had been endeavouring with those that they had interest in, and to try if the parliament would pass the king's Declaration into a law; and sometimes they had some hope from the Lord Chancellor and others; but when it came to the trial their hopes all failed them, and the Conformity imposed was made ten times more burdensome than it ever was before. For besides that the Convocation had made the Common Prayer Book more grievous than before, the parliament made a new Act of Uniformity, with a new form of subscription, and a new declaration to be made against the obligation of the Covenant, of which more anon. So that the king's Declaration did not only die before it came to execution, and all hopes and treaties and petitions were not only disappointed, but a weight more grievous than a thousand ceremonies was added to the old Conformity, with a grievous penalty.

By this means there was a great unanimity in the ministers, and the greater number were cast out. And as far as I could perceive, it was by some designed that it might be so. Many a time did we beseech them that they would have so much regard to the souls of men, and to the honour of England and of the Protestant religion, as that without any necessity at all they would not impose feared perjury upon them, nor that which conscience, and common esteem, and Popish adversaries would all call perjury; that Papists might not have this to cast in our teeth, and call the Protestants a perjured people, nor England or Scotland perjured lands. Oft have we proved to them that their cause and interest required no such thing. But all was but casting oil upon the flames, and

¹ = but merely, i.e. lawful, but not as a rule expedient.

forcing us to think of that monster of Milan that made his enemy renounce God to save his life before he stabbed him, that he might murder soul and body at a stroke. . .

When the Act of Uniformity was passed, it gave all the ministers that could not conform no longer time than till Bartholomew Day, August 24, 1662, and then they must be all cast out. (This fatal day called to remembrance the French massacre, when on the same day 30,000 or 40,000 Protestants perished by religious Roman zeal and charity.) I had no place but only that I preached twice a week by request in other men's congregations (at Milk Street and Blackfriars), and the last sermon that ever I preached in public was on May 25. The reasons why I gave over sooner than most others were: (1) because lawyers did interpret a doubtful clause in the Act as ending the liberty of lecturers at that time; (2) because I would let authority soon know that I intended to obey them in all that was lawful; (3) because I would let all ministers in England understand in time whether I intended to conform or not, for had I stayed to the last day, some would have conformed the sooner, upon a supposition that I intended it. These, with other reasons, moved me to cease three months before Bartholomew Day, which many censured me for a while, but after better saw the reasons of it.

When Bartholomew Day came, about one thousand eight hundred or two thousand ministers were silenced and cast out. . . .

And now came in the great inundation of calamities, which in many streams overwhelmed thousands of godly Christians, together with their pastors. . . Hundreds of able ministers, with their wives and children, had neither house nor bread. . . The people's poverty was so great that they were not able much to relieve their ministers. . . Many places had such set over them in their steads as they could not with conscience or comfort commit the conduct of their souls to. . . . The people were hereupon unavoidably divided among themselves. For some would have nothing to do with these imposed pastors, but would in private attend their former pastors only. Others would do both, and take all that they thought good of both. Some would only hear the public sermons. Others would also go to Common Prayer where the minister was tolerable. Some

would join in the Sacrament with them, where the minister was honest, and others would not. And this division they long foresaw, but could not possibly prevent. And the ministers themselves were thus also divided, who before seemed all one; for some would go to church to Common Prayer, to Sacraments, and others would not. Some of them thought that it was their duty to preach publicly in the streets or fields while the people desired it, and not to cease their work through fear of men till they lay in jails or were all banished. Others thought that a continued endeavour to benefit their people privately would be more serviceable to the Church than one or two sermons and a jail. . . . Hereupon those ministers that would not cease preaching were thrust into prisons, and censured (some of them) the rest that did not do as they. . . . The prelatists and they were hereby set at a further distance, and charity more destroyed, and reconciliation made more hopeless, and almost anything believed that was said against a Nonconformist. . . .

CHAPTER VI

CONFORMISTS AND NONCONFORMISTS

The different sorts described—Episcopal and Catholic Nonconformists—The case for Conformity—Objections to the English diocesan frame—Latitudinarians and the ethics of subscription.

AND here I think it meet, before I proceed, to open the true state of the Conformists and Nonconformists in England at this time.

The Conformists were of three sorts:

1. Some of the old ministers, called Presbyterians formerly, that conformed at Bartholomew-tide or after, who had been in possession before the king came in. These were also of several sorts: some of them were very able, worthy men, who conformed and subscribed upon this inducement, that the bishop bid them *do it in their own sense*. And so they subscribed to the parliament's words, and put their own sense upon them only by word of mouth, or in some by-paper. . . . Some had wives and children and poverty, which were great temptations to them. And most that I knew, when once they inclined to Conformity, did avoid the company of their brethren, and never asked them what their reasons were against Conformity.

2. A second sort of Conformists were those called Latitudinarians, who were mostly Cambridge men, Platonists or Cartesians, and many of them Arminians with some additions, having more charitable thoughts than others of the salvation of heathens and infidels, and some of them holding the opinions of Origen about the pre-existence of souls, etc. These were ingenious men and scholars, and of universal principles and free, abhorring at first the imposition of these little things, but thinking them not great enough to stick at when imposed. Of these, some (with Dr. More, their leader) lived privately in colleges, and sought not any preferment in the world; and others set themselves to rise.

These two forementioned parties were laudable preachers,

and were the honour of the Conformists, though not heartily theirs. . .

3. The third sort of Conformists was of those that were heartily such throughout. And these were also of three sorts: (1) those that were zealous for the diocesan party and the cause, and desirous to extirpate or destroy the Nonconformists; and these were supposed to be the high and swaying party; (2) those that were zealous for the party and the cause materially, but yet were more moderate (in their private wishes) to the Nonconformists, and did profess themselves that they could not subscribe and declare if they did not put a more favourable sense on the words than that which the Nonconformists supposed to be the plain sense; (3) those that were raw, or ignorant readers, or unlearned men, or sensual, scandalous ones, who would be hot for anything by which they might rise or be maintained. . .

The Nonconformists also were of divers sorts:

1. There were some few (of my acquaintance) who were for the old conformity, for bishops, Common Prayer Book, ceremonies and the old subscription, and against the imposing and taking of the Covenant (which they never took), and against the parliament's wars. But they could not subscribe that they *assent and consent to all things* now imposed; nor could they absolve all others in the three kingdoms from being obliged by the vow and covenant to endeavour Church reformation, though they would not have had them take the vow.

2. A greater number of the Nonconformists, or reconcilers, of no sect or party, but abhorring the very name of parties; who like *Ignatius's* episcopacy, but not the *English* diocesan frame, and like what is good in *Episcopal*, Presbyterians or Independents, but reject somewhat as evil in them all; being of the judgment which I have described myself to be in the beginning of this book. . .

3. A third sort of Nonconformists are the Presbyterians, whose judgment is foredescribed, and manifested in their writings to all the world. Of these two last sorts (if I be not taken for a partial witness) are the soberest and most judicious, unanimous, peaceable, faithful, able, constant ministers in this land, or that I have heard or read of, in

the Christian world: which I am able to say I speak without respect of persons, in obedience to my conscience, upon my long experience.

4. The fourth sort are the Independents, who are for the most part a serious, godly people, some of them moderate . . . and little differing from the moderate Presbyterians, and as well-ordered as any party that I know. But others of them more raw and self-conceited, and addicted to separations and divisions, their zeal being greater than their knowledge; who have opened the door to Anabaptists first, and then to all the other sects.

These sects are numerous, some tolerable and some intolerable, and being never incorporated with the rest, are not to be reckoned with them. Many of them (the Behmenists, Fifth Monarchy Men, Quakers and some Anabaptists) are proper fanatics, looking too much to revelations within, instead of the Holy Scriptures. . .

Next it will not be amiss if I briefly give you the sum of their several causes, and the reasons of their several ways.

The Conformists go several ways, according to their forementioned differences.

1. Those that are high prelatists say: For Episcopacy, it is of divine institution and perpetual usage in the Church, and necessary to order among the clergy and people, and of experienced benefit to this land, and most congruous to civil monarchy; and therefore not to be altered by any, no, not by the king and parliament, if they should swear it. Therefore the oath called the *Et cætera* Oath was formed before the war, to swear all men to be true to this prelacy, and not to change it.

2. Those that are called Conforming Presbyterians and Latitudinarians both say that our prelacy is lawful, though not necessary; and that Mr. Edward Stillingfleet's *Irenicon* hath well proved that no form of church government is of divine institution. And therefore when the magistrate commandeth any he is to be obeyed. But since they grew up to preferment they grow to be hot for the prelacy. . . .

The one sort say that ordination without diocesans is a nullity, and those that are so ordained are no ministers but laymen; and therefore their churches no true churches

(*in sensu politico*). And therefore that such must needs be re-ordained. The other sort say that their ordination was valid before *in foro spirituali* but not *in foro civili*; and that the repeating of it is but an ascertaining or a confirming act, as public marrying again would be after one is privately married, in case the law would bastardise or disinherit his children else. . . .

For the particular controversy about diocesans: (1) Some of the Nonconformists are against all bishops, as distinct from presbyters, by any other than a temporary presidency or moderatorship. But the most of them of my acquaintance are for the lawfulness of some stated Episcopacy; that is, that there be fixed presidents or bishops in every particular church they take to be lawful, as of human constitution and ecclesiastical custom, contrary to no law of God. (2) That there be more general overseers of many of these bishops and churches, as the apostles were (though without their extraordinary call and privileges), they think also lawful, if not in some sort of divine institution: (i.) Because church government being an ordinary standing work; in that, the apostles were to have successors. (ii.) Because they think it incredible, if the apostles had been against particular primitive Episcopacy, that no church or person would have been found on record to have borne witness against it till it had been so universally received by all the churches.

But they are all agreed that the English diocesan frame of government, and so the popish prelacy, is unlawful, and of dangerous tendency in the churches. . . .

Now concerning this diocesan frame of government, the Non-subscribers (called Puritans by many) do judge that it is sinful and contrary to the Word of God, both in the constitution and in the administration of it. And they lay upon it these heavy charges, the least of which, if proved, is of intolerable weight:

1. They say that *quantum in se* it destroyeth the pastoral office, which is of divine institution, and was known in the primitive church; for it doth deprive the presbyters of the third essential part of their office; for it is clear in Scripture that Christ appointed no presbyters that were not subservient to him in all the three parts of his office, as prophet, priest and king. . . .

2. The second charge against this diocesan prelacy is that it introduceth a new human species of presbyters or spiritual officers, instead of Christ's, which it destroyeth; that is, a sort of mere subject presbyters, that have no power of government but merely to teach and worship. . . .

3. A third charge which they bring against our prelacy is that it destroyeth the species or form of particular churches instituted by Christ. The churches which Christ instituted are "holy societies associated for personal holy communion under their particular pastors." But all such societies are destroyed by the diocesan frame. .

They distinguish between "personal local communion of saints by pastors and their flock," and communion of *hearts* only; and communion by delegation or deputies: (1) We have heart-communion with all the Catholic Church through the world. (2) Particular churches have communion for concord and mutual strength, in synods by their pastors or deputies. (3) But "a holy communion of souls or individual persons, as members of the same particular church, for public worship and a holy life," is specifically distinct from both the former, as is apparent (i.) by the distinct end; (ii.) the distinct manner of communion, yea and the *matter* of it. . . .

4. A fourth charge is that it setteth up a new church form which is unlawful, instead of that of Christ's institution; that is, a diocesan church consisting of many hundred parishes (which none of them are *churches* according to the diocesan frame, but *parts* of one Church). . . And that this church form is new is proved already; that is, that there was no diocesan church having many stated congregations and altars (much less many hundreds), and all under one only bishop or governor, either in Scripture time or two hundred years after, excepting only that in Alexandria and Rome some show of more assemblies than one under one bishop appeared a little sooner.

Here note that it is not an archbishop's church that we are speaking of, who is but the general pastor or bishop, having other bishops and churches under him; but it is a church *infimæ speciei*, commonly called "a particular church," which hath no other churches or bishops under it. And that none such was in Scripture times Dr. Hammond

hath manifested (there being then no presbyters distinct from bishops, as he saith on Acts xi.). And that there was none such of long time after is abundantly proved in my treatise of Episcopacy.

5. The fifth charge against the diocesan form is that it extirpateth the ancient Episcopacy, which they prove by what is said already: the ancient bishops were the heads of the presbyters and people of one single church only. "To every church," saith Ignatius, "there is one altar and one bishop with the presbyters, and the deacons my fellow-servants." There was then no bishop *infimæ speciei*, as distinct from an archbishop, that had more than one altar and church. But now all these bishops of particular churches are put down, and no church of one altar hath a bishop of its own, but only a church consisting of many hundred worshipping churches. In the ancient times every city that had a congregation of Christians had a bishop. But now every bishop hath many cities under him, which have all but one bishop. . .

6. The sixth charge is that, instead of the ancient bishops, a later sort of bishops is introduced, of a distinct species from all the ancient bishops; for then there were none but mere bishops of particular churches, and the archbishops, metropolitans and patriarchs that had the general oversight of these. But ours are of neither of these sorts. They are not bishops of particular worshipping churches that have one altar, but have hundreds of such. Nor are they archbishops, for they have no bishops under them. But they are just such as the archbishops or metropolitans in those days would have been, if they had put down all the bishops that were under them, and taken all the charge of government on themselves, leaving only teaching priests with the people, even as the Papists feign Gregory to have meant when he so vehemently denied the title of Universal Bishop as putting down the inferior bishops. Now any man that thinketh the species of Episcopacy described by Ignatius, and used in the primitive times, to be of divine or apostolical institution, must needs think that a species which, having deposed them all, doth stand up in their stead is utterly unlawful. And therefore this argument against diocesans is not managed by the Presbyterians as such, but by those that are for the primitive Episcopacy.

7. The seventh charge against the diocesan form (and that which sticketh more than all the rest) is that it maketh the church government or discipline which Christ hath commanded, and all the ancient churches practised, to be a *thing impossible* to be done, and so excludeth it; and therefore is unlawful. For to dispute "who shall be the governors of the church," when the meaning is "whether there shall be any government at all" (of the sort that Christ commandeth), is the present practice. . . .

And as you see what the discipline is that is to be exercised, so the number of persons on whom it is to be exercised may be gathered from what is said in the beginning, where is showed: (1) How many hundred parishes are in a diocese. (2) How many hundred or thousand souls in a parish (unless the very smallest). (3) And how many heretics, atheists, Papists, infidels, or swearers, cursers, railers, drunkards, fornicators and other scandalous sinners there are proportionably in most parishes, I leave to the judgment of every faithful pastor that ever tried it by a particular knowledge of his flock. . . .

And . who they be that are to exercise all this discipline I have showed before; even one Court or Consistory in a whole diocese, with the inconsiderable subserviency of the Archdeacon's Court (for the rural deans do nothing in it, and are themselves scarce known; and the pastor and churchwardens do nothing but present men to the Courts and execute part of their sentences).

All this being laid together, the impossibility of Christ's discipline in our churches is undeniable: . . . Bishop Edward Reynolds of Norwich was one that went along with us to the last in our desire and treaties for discipline and reformation. And who heareth of any such discipline exercised by him? who doubtless would do it if he could. Nay, I am confident that he will say himself that he hath not exercised it on a tenth part that are the due objects of it in any two parishes in his diocese. Nay, in his diocese there are many hundreds of godly people excommunicated or troubled (by sentence at least) for Nonconformity as in any diocese that I hear of in England; and the poor bishop looks on, and cannot hinder it. . . .

8. The eighth charge against our prelacy is that having cast out Christ's church - discipline, prescribed in the

Gospel, it setteth up, instead of it, an unlawful kind of church-discipline. And the unlawfulness they show in these particulars:

(1) In that the judges of the courts, as well as the rest, are mere laymen (the bishops' chancellors) who ordinarily admonish, excommunicate and absolve. . . .

(2) As to the matter of the English discipline, it consisteth not in the foredescribed convictions, reproofs, exhortations to repentance, praying for the sinner's repentance, telling him before two or three, or telling the Church; but in a citation, and such a course of process as in civil secular courts.

(3) And for the manner; it is not with holy seriousness and patience as may tend to the melting of a sinner's heart into true contrition, nor as may tend to awake him from his security with the terrors of the Lord, nor is it at all fitted to work upon the conscience (who can expect that laymen, and such men, in a public court, and such a court, should do it?). Nor do I believe that any subscribing conscionable minister will say that he ever heard a chancellor convert a sinner, or say that which was like or apt to bring him to true repentance. But, on the contrary, they work on them by terror of corporal penalties and mulcts, and harden them into a hatred of those that thus vex them. . . .

(4) And for the adjuncts: your discipline of excommunication is all enforced with imprisonment and the utter ruin of the excommunicate, upon a writ *de excommunicato capiendo*. . .

(5) And your discipline is exercised by strangers upon strangers, at many miles' distance, where the church that the sinner is to hold communion with heareth not the process, nor knoweth of the matter, nor perhaps the minister that should be his governor, but only they receive a paper from the Court containing the sentence; which the parson must read, and then in despite of him must admit the vilest to the church's communion, and read his absolution if the Court require it, let him never so well know the sinner to be impenitent. . . .

The . last charge against our frame of prelacy is that by its use of civil or coercive power it at once breaketh the command of Christ, and greatly injureth the civil

government. . . . Therefore the old rhymer said against the prelates:

Christus dixit quodam loco
 "Vos non sic" nec dixit joco:
 Dixit suis: Ergo isti
 Cujus sunt? non certo Christi.

. . . To the Latitudinarians and involuntary Conformists, who plead that no church government, as to *the form*, is of divine institution, they answer: this is to condemn themselves, and say, "Because no form is of God's institution, therefore I will declare that the episcopal form is of divine institution." For this is part of their subscription or declaration, when they profess, assent and consent to all things in the Book of Common Prayer and ordination. . . .

The Latitudinarians say that the general rule is that "all sayings are to be interpreted in the best sense that the words will bear." *Ergo*—

Answer. In the best sense which hath evidence of truth, charity requireth us to take all the words of others. But the question is first, which is the true sense and not which is the best. And if it can be proved that another is either certainly or probably the true meaning of any words, we must not feign to a better sense because it is better. In the case in hand the law-makers have plainly declared their own sense by their speeches, and votes, and deliberate plain expressions, and by another Act (for corporations). If I might take all oaths and statutes in the best sense which possibly those words may be used to express, then I could take almost any oath in the world, and disobey any law in the world under pretence of obeying it; and tell any lie under the pretence of telling truth, and jesuitical equivocation would be but the common duty of the charitable. But charity is not blind, nor will it prove a fit cover for a lie. . . .

CHAPTER VII

PERSECUTION

*A Nonconformist of the old strain—Missing their prey—
Tribute to the Quakers—Attempted assassination of
Baxter.*

ON the 26th of Decemb. (1662) the king sent forth a Declaration, expressing his purpose to grant some indulgence or liberty in religion (with other matters), not excluding the Papists, many of whom had deserved so well of him. . . .

Good old Mr. Simeon Ash was buried the very even of Bartholomew Day, and went seasonably to heaven at the very time when he was to be cast out of the Church. He was one of our oldest Nonconformists (of the old strain; for now conforming is quite another thing than before the wars). He was a Christian of the primitive simplicity; not made for controversy, nor inclined to disputes, but of a holy life and a cheerful mind, and of a fluent elegance in prayer, full of matter and excellent words. His ordinary speech was holy and edifying. Being confined much to his house by the gout (and having a good estate and a very good wife, enclined to entertainments and liberality), his house was very much frequented by ministers. He was always cheerful, without profuse laughter or liberty or vain words, never troubled with doubtings of his interest in Christ, but tasting the continual love of God, was much disposed to the communicating of it to others and comforting dejected souls. His eminent sincerity made him exceedingly loved and honoured. . . . He died as he lived, in great consolation and cheerful exercise of faith, molested with no fears or doubts discernible; exceeding glad of the company of his friends; and greatly encouraging all about him with his joyful expressions in respect of death and his approaching change, so that no man could seem to be more fearless of it. When he had at last lain speechless for some time, as soon as I came to him gladness so excited his spirits, that he spake joyfully and freely of his going to God to those about him. I stayed with him his last evening,

till we had long expected his change (being speechless all that day), and in the night he departed. . . .

And as we were forbidden to preach, so we were vigilantly watched in private, that we might not exhort one another or pray together; and (as I foretold them oft, they would use us when they had silenced us) every meeting for prayer was called a dangerous meeting for sedition, or a conventicle at least. I will now give but one instance of their kindness to myself. One Mr. Beale, in Hatton Garden, having a son (his only child, and very towardly and hopeful) who had been long sick of a dangerous fever (as I remember, a quartan), and by relapse brought so low that the physicians thought he would die, desired a few friends, of whom I was one, to meet at his house to pray for him; and because it pleased God to hear our prayers and that very night to restore him, his mother shortly after falling sick of a fever, we were desired to meet to pray for her recovery (the last day when she was near to death). Among those that were to be there, it fell out, through some other occasions, that Dr. Bates and I did fail them, and could not come. But it was known at Westminster that we were appointed to be there. Whereupon two justices of the peace were procured from the distant parts of the town, one from Westminster and one from Clerkenwell, to come with the parliament's sergeant-at-arms to apprehend us. They came in the evening, when part of the company were gone (there were only a few of their kindred there, besides two or three ministers to pray). They came upon them into the room where the gentlewoman lay ready to die, and drew the curtains, and took some of their names, but missing of their prey returned disappointed. What a joy would it have been to them that reproached us as Presbyterian seditious schismatics to have found but such an occasion as *praying with a dying woman* to have laid us up in prison. Yet that same week there was published a witty malicious invective against the silenced ministers, in which it was affirmed that Dr. Bates and I were at Mr. Beale's house such a day keeping a conventicle. But the liar had so much extraordinary modesty as within a day or two to print a second edition in which those words (so easily to be disproved) were left out. Such eyes were everywhere then upon us.

Many holy, excellent ministers were about these times laid in the jails, in many counties, for private meetings to preach and pray, and some for venturing to preach publicly in churches which had no ministers (for so many were cast out that all their places could not presently be supplied). . . .

In the beginning of June 1663, the old peaceable Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Juxon, died, and Dr. Gilbert Sheldon, Bishop of London, succeeded in his room.

About these times the talk of liberty to the silenced ministers (for what ends I know not) was revived again, and we were blamed by many that we had never once petitioned the parliament (for which we had sufficient reasons); and it was talked about that they were resolved to grant us either an indulgence (by way of dispensation) or a comprehension by some additional Act, taking in all that could conform in some particular points. Hereupon there was great talk upon the question whether the way of indulgence or the way of comprehension were more desirable. . . .

For my own part I meddled but little with any such business since the failing of that which incurred so much displeasure; and the rather because, though the brethren commissioned with me stuck to me as to the cause, yet they were not forward enough to bear their part of the ungrateful part in the management, nor of the consequent displeasure. . . .

Instead of indulgence and comprehension, on the last day of June 1663 the Act against private meetings for religious exercises passed the House of Commons, and shortly after was made a law. The sum of it was that "every person above sixteen years old, who is present at any meeting under colour or pretence of any exercise of religion, in other manner than is allowed by the liturgy or practice of the Church of England, where there are five persons more than that household, shall for the first offence by a justice of peace be recorded and sent to jail three months till he pay five pound; and for the second offence six months till he pay ten pound; and the third time, being convicted by a jury, shall be banished to some of the (American) plantations, excepting New England or Virginia." . . .

And now came in the people's trial, as well as the ministers'. While the danger and sufferings lay on the ministers alone, the people were very courageous, and exhorted them to stand it out and preach till they went to prison. But when it came to be their own case, they were as venturous till they were once surprised and imprisoned; but then their judgments were much altered, and they that censured ministers before as cowardly, because they preached not publicly whatever followed, did now think that it was better to preach often in secret to a few than but once or twice in public to many; and that secrecy was no sin when it tended to the furtherance of the work of the Gospel, and to the Church's good. Especially the rich were as cautelous as the ministers. But yet their meetings were so ordinary and so well known that it greatly tended to the jailer's commodity. . . .

And here the fanatics called Quakers did greatly relieve the sober people for a time; for they were so resolute, and gloried in their constancy and sufferings, that they assembled openly (at the Bull and Mouth near Aldersgate) and were dragged away daily to the common jail; and yet desisted not, but the rest came the next day nevertheless. So that the jail at Newgate was filled with them. Abundance of them died in prison, and yet they continued their assemblies still. And the poor deluded souls would sometimes meet only to sit still in silence (when, as they said, the Spirit did not speak). And it was a great question whether this silence was a "religious exercise not allowed by the liturgy," etc. And once upon some such reasons as these, when they were tried at the sessions in order to a banishment, the jury acquitted them, but were grievously threatened for it. After that another jury did acquit them, and some of them were fined and imprisoned for it. But thus the Quakers so employed Sir R. B. and the other searchers and prosecutors, that they had the less leisure to look after the meetings of soberer men, which was much to their present ease. . . .

My judgment was for the holding of communion with assemblies of both parties; and ordinarily I went to some parish church, where I heard a learned minister that had not obtruded himself upon the people, but was chosen by them, and preached well (as Dr. Wilkins, Dr. Tillotson,

Mr. Nest, etc.), and I joined also in the common prayers of the church. And as oft else as I had fit opportunity, I privately preached and prayed myself, either with Independents or Presbyterians that desired me. And I professed to all upon all occasions . . . I would occasionally join with any true church in public or private; so be it they preached not for heresy, nor against a holy and peaceable life, nor turned not their strain to sedition or uncharitable reviling one another. Even as I would hold occasional communion with a church of Lutherans, or Greeks, or Abassines,¹ if I passed through their countries. . . . But many honest people were led to depart too far from the parish assemblies, and from charity and unity itself. . . . Yea, many turned Quakers, because the Quakers kept their meetings openly, and went to prison for it cheerfully. . . .

Having lived three years and more in London, and finding it neither agree with my health or studies (the one being brought very low and the other interrupted), and all public service being at an end, I betook myself to live in the country (at Acton), that I might set myself to writing and do what service I could for posterity, and live as much as possibly I could out of the world. Thither I came 1663, July 14, where I followed my studies privately in quietness, and went every Lord's-day to the public assembly, when there was any preaching or catechising, and spent the rest of the day with my family (and a few poor neighbours that came in); spending now and then a day in London; and the next year, 1664, I had the company of divers godly faithful friends that tabled with me in summer, with whom I solaced myself with much content. . . .

March 26, being the Lord's-day, 1665, as I was preaching in a private house, where we received the Lord's Supper, a bullet came in at the window among us, and passed by me, and narrowly missed the head of a sister-in-law of mine that was there, and hurt none of us; and we could never discover whence it came. . . .

And now after all the breaches on² the churches, the ejection of the ministers, and impenitency under all, wars and plague and danger of famine began all at once on us.

¹ = Abyssinians.

² ? in.

War with the Hollanders, which yet continueth. And the driest winter, spring and summer that ever man alive knew or our forefathers mention of late ages; so that the grounds were burnt like the highways, where the cattle should have fed. The meadow grounds where I lived bare but four loads of hay, which before bare forty. The plague hath seized on the famousest and most excellent city of Christendom; and at this time 8,000 and near 300¹ die of all diseases in a week. It hath scattered and consumed the inhabitants, multitudes being dead and fled. The calamities and cries of the diseased and impoverished are not to be conceived by those that are absent from them. Every man is a terror to his neighbour and himself; for God for our sins is a terror to us all. O how is London, the place which God hath honoured with his Gospel above all places of the earth, laid low in horrors, and wasted almost to desolation, by the wrath of God, whom England hath contemned; and a God-hating generation are consumed in their sins, and the righteous are also taken away as from greater evil yet to come. Strange comets (which fill the thoughts and writings of astronomers) did in the winter and spring a long time appear before these calamities. Yet under all these desolations the wicked are hardened, and cast all on the fanatics; and the true dividing fanatics and sectaries are not yet humbled for former miscarriages, but cast all on the prelates and imposers. And the ignorant vulgar are stupid, and know not what use to make of anything they feel. But thousands of the sober, prudent, faithful servants of the Lord are mourning in secret, and waiting for his salvation; in humility and hope they are staying themselves on God, and expecting what he will do with them. From London it is spread through many counties, especially next London, where few places, especially corporations, are free; which makes me oft groan and wish that LONDON AND ALL THE CORPORATIONS OF ENGLAND WOULD REVIEW THE CORPORATION ACT AND THEIR OWN ACTS, AND SPEEDILY REPENT. Leaving most of my family at Acton compassed about with the plague, at the writing of this, through the mercy of my dear God and Father in Christ, I am hitherto in safety and comfort in the house of my dearly beloved and honoured

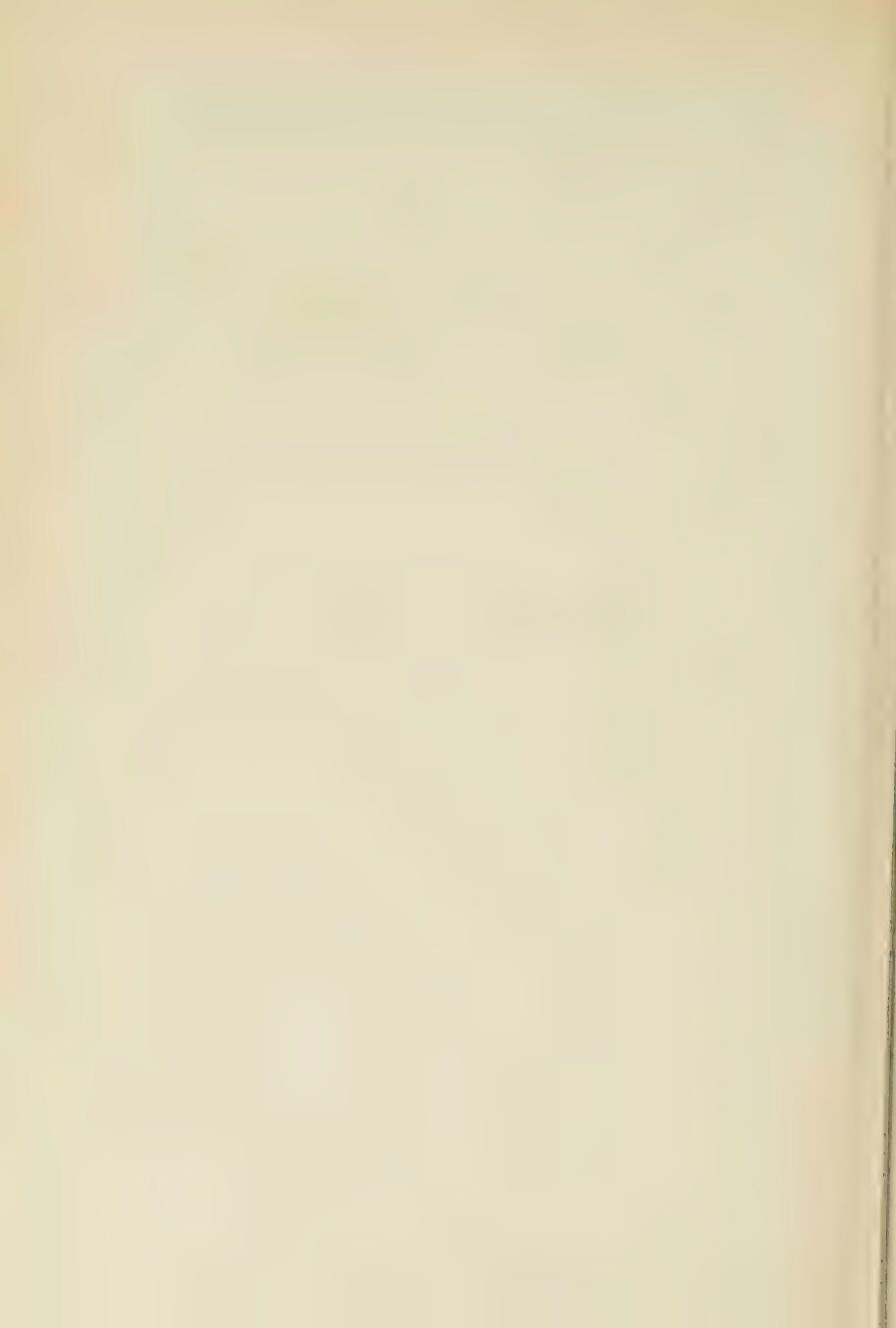
¹ i.e. nearly 8300.

friend Mr. Richard Hampden, of Hampden, in Buckinghamshire, the true heir of his famous father's sincerity, piety and devotedness to God, whose person and family the Lord preserve, and honour them that honour him, and be their everlasting rest and portion.

Hampden, Septemb. 28,

1665.

PART THREE



PART THREE

CHAPTER I

THE PLAGUE AND THE FIRE OF LONDON

*Heroic devotion of Nonconformists during the Plague—
Five-mile Act—Sea-fights—Description of Fire of
London—How Independents gained a sectarian
advantage.*

1665-1668

SEEING God hath been pleased to add these few years more to my pilgrimage, I will add some account of his providences towards me and his people in this land in these additional years. When I ended my last narrative, the dreadful plague was laying waste, especially the city of London, and thence spread into the neighbouring parts, and into many distant cities and corporations of the land. . .

The number that died in London (besides all the rest of the land) was about an hundred thousand, reckoning the Quakers and others, that were never put in the bills of mortality, with those that were in the bills.

The richer sort removing out of the city, the greatest blow fell on the poor. At the first so few of the religiouser sort were taken away that (according to the mode of too many such) they began to be puffed up and boast of the great difference which God did make. But quickly after they all fell alike. . . .

It is scarce possible for people that live in a time of health and security to apprehend the dreadfulness of that pestilence. How fearful people were, thirty or forty, if not an hundred miles from London, of anything that they bought from any mercer's or draper's shop, or of any goods that were brought to them, or of any person that came to their houses. How they would shut their doors against their friends, and if a man passed over the fields, how one would avoid another, as we did in the time of wars; and how every man was a terror to another. O how sinfully

unthankful are we for our quiet societies, habitations and health! . . .

But one great benefit the plague brought to the city: that is, it occasioned the silenced ministers more openly and laboriously to preach the gospel, to the exceeding comfort and profit of the people; insomuch that to this day the freedom of preaching which this occasioned cannot, by the daily guards of soldiers nor by the imprisonments of multitudes, be restrained. . . And when the plague grew hot most of the conformable ministers fled, and left their flocks in the time of their extremity, whereupon divers Nonconformists, pitying the dying and distressed people that had none to call the impenitent to repentance, nor to help men to prepare for another world, nor to comfort them in their terrors, when about ten thousand died in a week, resolved that no obedience to the laws of any mortal men whosever could justify them for neglecting of men's souls and bodies in such extremities, no more than they can justify parents for famishing their children to death. And that when Christ shall say, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of these, ye did it not to me," it will be a poor excuse to say, "Lord, I was forbidden by the law." . . .

And at the same time, whilst God was consuming the people by these judgments and the Nonconformists were labouring to save men's souls, the parliament (which sate at Oxford, whither the king removed from the danger of the plague) was busy in making an Act of confinement, to make the silenced ministers' case incomparably harder than it was before, by putting upon them a certain oath which, if they refused, they must not come (except the road) within five miles of any city, or of any corporation, or any place that sendeth burgesses to the parliament, or of any place wherever they had been ministers, or had preached since the Act of Oblivion. So little did the sense of God's terrible judgments, or of the necessities of many hundred thousand ignorant souls, or the groans of the poor people for the teaching which they had lost, or the fear of the great and final reckoning, affect the hearts of the prelatists, or stop them in their way. . . .

By this Act the case of the ministers was made so hard that many thought themselves necessitated to break it,

not only by the necessity of their office, but by a natural impossibility of keeping it, unless they should murder themselves and their families. . . .

Yea, they allowed them not to be kept as common beggars, on the alms of the parish; but when by the law every beggar is to be brought to the place of his birth, or last abode, and there to be kept on alms, no minister must come within five miles of the parish where he ever exercised his ministry, nor any that were born in cities and corporations must come within five miles of them for relief.

In this strait, those ministers that had any maintenance of their own did find out some dwellings in obscure villages, or in some few market-towns which were no corporations. And those that had nothing did leave their wives and children and hid themselves abroad, and sometimes came secretly to them by night. But (God bringing good out of men's evil) many resolved to preach the more freely in cities and corporations till they went to prison. . . . Seeing therefore the question came to this, whether beggary and famine to themselves and families, with the deserting of their callings and the people's souls, was to be chosen, or the faithful performance of their work, with a prison after, and the people's compassion, they thought the latter the more eligible. . . .

Those ministers that were unmarried did easilier bear their poverty; but it pierceth a man's heart to have children crying, and sickness come upon them for want of wholesome food or by drinking water, and to have nothing to relieve them. And women are usually less patient of suffering than men, and their impatience would be more to a husband than his own wants. . . .

A little before this, L. B. and Sir — S. committed such horrid wickedness in their drinking (acting the part of preachers in their shirts, in a balcony, with words and actions not to be named), that one (or both) of them was openly censured for it in Westminster Hall by one of the Courts of Justice. (You will say, "Sure, it was a shameful crime indeed.") And shortly after a lightning did seize on the church where the monuments of the — were, and tore it, melted the leads, and broke the monuments into so small pieces that the people that came to see the place put the scraps with the letters on into their pockets, to

show as a wonder, and more wonderful than the consumption of the rest by fire.

In this time the haunting of Mr. Mompesson's house in Wiltshire with strange noises and motions, for very many months together, was the common talk. Of which, Mr. Jos. Glanvil having wrote the story, I say no more. . .

The war began with the Dutch, whom the French assisted.

The plague which began at Acton, July 29, 1665, being ceased on March 1 following, I returned home, and found the churchyard like a ploughed field with graves, and many of my neighbours dead, but my house (near the churchyard) uninfected, and that part of my family which I left there all safe, through the great mercy of God, my merciful protector. . . .

On July 25 was the second great sea-fight, in which the English had the better. And in August we seemed to prevail yet more, insomuch that Monk was said to proceed so far as to enter their harbour and burn 120 ships in the river, and to burn a thousand houses on the land, and give the seamen the plunder. . . . But our height was quickly taken down by the loss of many Hamburg ships first, and then by a loss of many of our men, in an attempt upon their merchant-ships in the Sound at Denmark, but especially by the firing of the city of London.

On September 2, after midnight, London was set on fire; and on September 3 the Exchange was burnt; and in three days almost all the city within the walls, and much without them. The season had been exceeding dry before, and the wind in the east, where the fire began. The people having none to conduct them aright could do nothing to resist it, but stand and see their houses burn without remedy, the engines being presently out of order and useless. The streets were crowded with people and carts, to carry away what goods they could get out. And they that were most active and befriended (by their wealth) got carts, and saved much; and the rest lost almost all. The loss in houses and goods is scarcely to be valued. And, among the rest, the loss of books was an exceeding great detriment to the interest of piety and learning. Almost all the booksellers in St. Paul's Churchyard brought their books into vaults under St. Paul's Church, where it was thought almost

impossible that fire should come. But the church itself being on fire, the exceeding weight of the stones falling down did break into the vault and let in the fire, and they could not come near to save the books. The library also of Sion College was burnt, and most of the libraries of ministers, conformable and nonconformable, in the city, with the libraries of many Nonconformists of the country, which had been lately brought up to the city. I saw the half-burnt leaves of books near my dwelling at Acton, six miles from London; but others found them near Windsor, almost twenty miles distant. At last some seamen taught them to blow up some of the next houses with gunpowder, which stopped the fire. . . .

It was a sight that might have given any man a lively sense of the vanity of this world, and all the wealth and glory of it, and of the future conflagration of all the world. To see the flames mount up towards heaven, and proceed so furiously without restraint; to see the streets filled with people astonished, that had scarce sense left them to lament their own calamity; to see the fields filled with heaps of goods, and sumptuous buildings, curious rooms, costly furniture and household stuff, yea, warehouses and furnished shops and libraries, etc., all on a flame, and none durst come near to receive anything; to see the king and nobles ride about the streets, beholding all these desolations, and none could afford the least relief; to see the air, as far as could be beheld, so filled with the smoke that the sun shined through it with a colour like blood; yea, even when it was setting in the west, it so appeared to them that dwelt on the west side of the city; but the dolefullest sight of all was afterwards to see what a ruinous, confused place the city was, by chimneys and steeples only standing in the midst of cellars and heaps of rubbish; so that it was hard to know where the streets had been, and dangerous, of a long time, to pass through the ruins, because of vaults and fire in them—no man that seeth not such a thing can have a right apprehension of the dreadfulfulness of it. . . .

But yet, alas! the effect of all these dreadful judgments was not such as might have been hoped for, but still one party cast all the cause upon another, and the two extremes did look more at each other's faults than at their own. . . .

But some good rose out of all these evils. . . The people's necessity was unquestionable. For they had none other to hear, saving a few churches that could hold no considerable part of the people. So that to forbid them now to hear the Nonconformists was all one as to forbid them all public worshipping of God, and to command them to forsake religion and to live like atheists; and thus to forbid them to seek for heaven when they had lost almost all that they had on earth, and to take from them their spiritual comforts after all their outward comforts were gone, they thought a cruelty so barbarous as to be unbecoming any man that would not own himself to be a devil. But all this little moved the ruling prelates, saving that shame restrained them from imprisoning the preachers so hotly and forwardly as before. . . .

In June 1667, the Dutch came up the River of Thames, and Sir Edward Sprag, a Papist, that was governor of our fort at Sheerness, had not fortified it, and deserted it. And so they came up to Chatham, and burnt some of our greatest ships, and took away some, while we partly looked on and partly resisted to no great purpose. And had they but come up to London, they might have done much more. This cast us into a great consternation. . . .

Whilst that all these calamities, especially our loss and disgrace by the Dutch, must be laid on some or other, the parliament at last laid all upon the Lord Chancellor Hyde. And the king was content it should be so. . . And so he was banished by an Act, during his life. The sale of Dunkirk to the French and a great comely house which he had new built increased the displeasure that was against him. But there were greater causes which I must not name. . . .

About this time the E. of S. (a Papist), having a very fair wife (daughter to the E. of C.), a Papist also (with whom lived Mr. Johnson, alias Terret, the disputing champion for Popery), she liked other men so much better than her husband that she forsook him, and kept herself secret from his knowledge. But he, believing that the Duke of Buckingham kept her secretly, was not content to lose his wife, but he would also lose his life. And sending the Duke of Buckingham a challenge, they met and fought, the duke having Capt. Holmes and Jenkins with him, and the Earl of Shrewsbury, Bernond, Howard and another,

where Howard killed Jenkins, and the duke wounded the earl, of which wounds he died. And the king pardoned the duke, but strictly prohibited duels for the future. The duke also and the Marquis of Dorchester had a scuffle at boxing in an open committee of parliament. . . .

At the same time the ministers of London who had ventured to keep open meetings in their houses, and preached to great numbers contrary to the law, were by the king's favour connived at. So that the people went openly to hear them without fear. Some imputed this to the king's own inclination to liberty of conscience; some to the Duke of Buckingham's prevalency; some to the Papists' interest, who were for liberty of conscience for their own interest. . . .

But whatever the cause of the connivance was, it is certain that the country ministers were so much encouraged by the boldness and liberty of those at London that they did the like in most parts of England, and crowds of the most religiously-inclined people were their hearers. And some few got, in a travelling way, into pulpits where they were not known, and the next day went away to another place. And this, especially with the great discontents of the people for their manifold payments, and of cities and corporations for the great decay of trade, and the breaking and impoverishing of many thousands by the burning of the city, together with the lamentable weakness and badness of great numbers of the ministers that were put into the Nonconformists' places, did turn the hearts of the most of the common people in all parts against the bishops and their ways, and enclined them to the Nonconformists, though fear restrained men from speaking what they thought, especially the richer sort. . . .

In April 1668, Dr. Creighton, Dean of Wells, the most famous, loquacious, ready-tongued preacher of the court, who was used to preach Calvin to hell and the Calvinists to the gallows, and by his scornful revilings and jests to set the court on a laughter, was suddenly, in the pulpit (without any sickness), surprised with astonishment, worse than Dr. South, the Oxford orator, had been before him; and when he had repeated a sentence over and over, and was so confounded that he could go no further at all, he was fain, to all men's wonder, to come down. And his case

was more wonderful than almost any other man's, being not only a fluent extemporate speaker, but one that was never known to want words, especially to express his satirical or bloody thoughts. . . .

In September, Colonel Phillips (a courtier of the Bed-chamber, and my next neighbour, who spake me fair) complained to the king of me for preaching to great numbers; but the king put it by, and nothing was done at that time. . . .

And here I think I ought to give posterity notice that, by the prelatists' malice and unreasonable implacable violence, Independency and Separation got greater advantages against Presbytery, and all settled accidental extrinsic order and means of concord, than ever it had in these kingdoms since the world began. For powerful and godly preachers (though now most silenced) had in twenty years' liberty brought such numbers to serious godliness that it was vain for the devil or his servants to hope that suffering could make the most forsake it. And to the prelatists they would never turn while they saw them, for the sake of their own wealth and lordships, and a few forms and ceremonies, silence so many hundred worthy self-denying ministers, that had been instruments of their good, and to become the soul of the profane malignant enmity to the far greatest part of the most serious religious people in three kingdoms. And Presbyterians were forced to forbear all exercise of their way; they durst not meet together (synodically) unless in a jail. They could not (ordinarily) be the pastors of parish churches, no, not for the private part of the work, being driven five miles from all their former charges and auditors, and from every city and corporation. Which law, while they durst not (for the most part of them) obey, they were fain to live privately, as still flying from a jail, and to preach to none but those that sought to them and thrust in upon them. So that their congregations were, through necessity, just of independent and separating shape and outward practice, though not upon the same principles. And the common people (though pious) are so apt to be led by outward palpable appearances, that they forgot both former principles and sad effects and practices (though such as one would think should never have been forgotten, at least by them who suffered

all these confusions and calamities as the fruits), yea, more than so: (1) the sense of our common faultiness; (2) and the necessity of our present concord; (3) and the harshness of grating upon suffering persons; (4) and the reconciling nature of our common sufferings, made us think it unseasonable and sinful (though after ten years) to tell one another never so gently of our former faults, or to touch upon our different principles; but 'twas thought best to bury all in silence, whilst the fruits of them spread more, and leavened a great part of the religious people of the city, yea, of the land. . . .

And another advantage was that, being more than the rest against the bishops, liturgies, ceremonies and parish-communion, they agreed much better with the disposition and passions of most of the religious suffering people. And those of us that were of another mind, and refused not parish-communion in some places and cases, were easily represented by them to the people as lukewarm temporisers, men of too large principles, who supped the antichristian pottage, though we would not eat the flesh. . .

But whoever be the sect-masters, it is notorious that the prelates (though not they only) are the sect-makers, by driving the poor people, by violence and the viciousness of too many of their instruments, into these alienations and extremes (though I confess that men's guilt, in the days of liberty of conscience, must silence both masters and disciples from justifying themselves). . . .

CHAPTER II

AT ACTON

*Dr. Ryves—Sir Matthew Hale—Baxter's arrest
and imprisonment.*

1670

BUT I must return and say something of my own affairs. Whilst I lived at Acton, as long as the Act against conventicles was in force, though I preached to my family, few came to hear me of the town; partly because they thought it would endanger me, and partly for fear of suffering themselves, but especially because they were an ignorant poor people, and had no appetite to such things. But when the Act was expired, there came so many that I wanted room; and when once they had come and heard, they afterward came constantly. Insomuch that in a little time there was a great number of them that seemed very seriously affected with the things they heard, and almost all the town and parish, besides abundance from Brentford and the neighbour parishes, came. And I know not of three in the parish that were adversaries to us or our endeavours, or wished us ill. . . .

The parson of the parish was Dr. Ryves, Dean of Windsor, Dean of Wolverhampton, parson of Haseley and of Acton, Chaplain-in-ordinary to the king, etc. His curate was a weak, dull young man, that spent most of his time in ale-houses and read a few dry sentences to the people but once a day. But yet because he preached true doctrine, and I had no better to hear, I constantly heard him when he preached, and went to the beginning of the Common Prayer; and my house facing the church door, within hearing of it, those that heard me before went with me to the church, scarce three that I know of in the parish refusing; and when I preached after the public exercise they went out of the church into my house. It pleased the doctor and parson that I came to church and brought others with me. But he was not able to bear the sight of

peoples crowding into my house, though they heard him also; so that, though he spake me fair and we lived in seeming love and peace (while he was there), yet he could not long endure it. And when I had brought the people to church to hear him, he would fall upon them with groundless reproaches, as if he had done it purposely to drive them away, and yet thought that my preaching to them, because it was in a house, did all the mischief, though he never accused me of anything that I spake. For I preached nothing but Christianity and submission to our superiors, faith, repentance, hope, love, humility, self-denial, meekness, patience and obedience.

But he was the more offended because I came not to the Sacrament with him; though I communicated in the other parish-churches at London and elsewhere. I was loth to offend him by giving him the reason, which was that, he being commonly reputed a swearer, a curser, a railer, etc., in those tender times it would have been so great an offence to the congregational brethren if I had communicated with him (and perhaps have hastened their sufferings who durst not do the same), that I thought it would do more harm than good.

The last year of my abode at Acton I had the happiness of a neighbour whom I cannot easily praise above his worth, which was Sir Mat. Hale, Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, whom all the judges and lawyers of England admired for his skill in law and for his justice, and scholars honoured for his learning, and I highly valued for his sincerity, mortification, self-denial, humility, conscientiousness, and his close fidelity in friendship. When he came first to town I came not near him, lest, being a silenced and suspected person (with his superiors), I should draw him also under suspicion and do him wrong, till I had notice round about of his desire of my acquaintance. And I scarce ever conversed so profitably with any other person in my life.

He was a man of no quick utterance, but often hesitant, but spake with great reason. He was most precisely just, insomuch as I believe he would have lost all that he had in the world rather than do an unjust act. . . . His great advantage for innocency was that he was no lover of riches or of grandeur. His garb was too plain. He studiously avoided all unnecessary familiarity with great persons, and

all that manner of living which signifieth wealth and greatness. He kept no greater a family than myself. . . .

The conference which I had frequently with him (mostly about the immortality of the soul and other foundation points, and philosophical) was so edifying that his very questions and objections did help me to more light than other men's solutions. . . . When the people crowded in and out of my house to hear, he openly showed me so great respect before them at the door, and never spake a word against it, as was no small encouragement to the common people to go on; though the other sort muttered that a judge should seem so far to countenance that which they took to be against the law. . . . He had been the learned Selden's intimate friend, and one of his executors. And because the Hobbians and other infidels would have persuaded the world that Selden was of their mind, I desired him to tell me truth therein. And he assured me that Selden was an earnest professor of the Christian faith and so angry an adversary to Hobbes that he hath rated him out of the room. . . .

At this time (1670) our parson, Dean Ryves, got this following advantage against me (as I had it from his own mouth). At Wolverhampton, in Staffordshire, where he was dean, were abundant of Papists and violent formalists, amongst whom was one Brasgirdle, an apothecary, who in conference with Mr. Reynolds (an able preacher there, silenced and turned out), by his bitter words tempted him into so much indiscretion as to say that "the Nonconformists were not so contemptible for number and quality as he made them, that most of the people were of their mind, that Cromwell, though an usurper, had kept up England against the Dutch, etc. And that he marvelled that he would be so hot against private meetings when at Acton the dean suffered them at the next door." With this advantage Brasgirdle writeth all this, greatly aggravated, to the dean. The dean hastens away with it to the king, as if it were the discovery of a treason. . . . The king, exasperated by the name of Cromwell and other unadvised words, as the dean told me, bid him go to the Bishop of London from him, and him so to the suppression of my meeting (which was represented to him also as much greater than it was), whereupon two justices were chosen

for their turn to do it, one Ross, of Brentford, a Scot, before-named, and one Phillips, a steward of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Hereupon Ross and Phillips send a warrant to the constable to apprehend me and bring me before them to Brentford. When I came, they shut out all persons from the room, and would not give leave for any one person, no, not their own clerk or servant or the constable, to hear a word that was said between us. They told me that I was convict of keeping conventicles contrary to law, and so they would tender me the Oxford Oath. . . .

I bade them take notice that I had not refused their oath, but desired an explication of it, which they refused to give (though I had reason enough to resolve me not to take it, however they, that were not the makers of the law, should have expounded it). And so Phillips presently wrote my *mittimus*. . . .

They would have given me leave to stay till Monday before I went to jail, if I would promise them not to preach the next Lord's-day, which I denied to promise, and so went away the next morning. . . .

As I went to prison I called on Serjeant Fountain, my special friend, to take his advice (for I would not be so injurious to Judge Hale). And he perused my *mittimus*, and in short advised me to seek for a *habeas corpus*, yet not in the usual court (the King's Bench), for reasons known to all that know the judges, nor yet in the Exchequer, lest his kindness to me should be an injury to Judge Hale, and so to the kingdom (and the power of that court therein is questioned), but at the Common Pleas, which he said might grant it, though it be not usual.

But my greatest doubt was whether the king would not take it ill that I rather sought to the law than unto him; or if I sought any release rather than continued in prison. My imprisonment was at present no great suffering to me, for I had an honest jailer, who showed me all the kindness he could; I had a large room, and the liberty of walking in a fair garden; and my wife was never so cheerful a companion to me as in prison, and was very much against my seeking to be released, and she had brought so many necessities that we kept house as contentedly and comfortably as at home, though in a narrower room, and I had

the sight of more of my friends in a day than I had at home in half a year. And I knew that if I got out against their will my sufferings would be never the nearer to an end. But yet on the other side: (1) It was the extremest heat of summer, when London was wont to have epidemical diseases. And the hope of my dying in prison I have reason to think was one great inducement to some of the instruments to move to what they did. (2) And my chamber being over the gate, which was knocked and opened with noise of prisoners just under me almost every night, I had little hope of sleeping but by day, which would have been likely to have quickly broken my strength, which was so little, as that I did but live. (3) And the number of visitors by day did put me out of hope of studying, or doing anything but entertain them. (4) And I had neither leave at any time to go out of doors, much less to church on the Lord's-days, nor on that day to have any come to me, nor to preach to any but my family.

Upon all these considerations the advice of some was that I should petition the king, but to that I was averse. . . I had so many great men at court who had professed extraordinary kindness to me (though I was never beholden to one man of them all for more than words), that I knew if it were to be done, they would do it without my seeking. And my counsellor, Serjeant Fountain, advised me not to seek to them, nor yet to refuse their favour if they offered it, but to be wholly passive as to the court; but to seek my freedom by law, because of my great weakness and the probability of future peril to my life. And this counsel I followed.

The Earl of Orrery, I heard, did earnestly and speedily speak to the king how much my imprisonment was to his disservice. The Earl of Manchester could do little, but by the Lord Arlington, who with the Duke of Buckingham seemed much concerned in it. But the Earl of Lauderdale (who would have been forwardest had he known the king's mind to be otherwise) said nothing. And so all my great friends did me not the least service, but made a talk of it, with no fruit at all. And the moderate honest part of the episcopal clergy were much offended, and said I was chosen out designedly to make them all odious to the people. But Sir John Babor, often visiting me, assured me that he had

spoken to the king about it, and (when all had done their best) he was not willing to be seen to relax the law, and discourage justices in executing it, etc., but he would not be offended if I sought my remedy at law (which most thought would come to nothing). . . .

When I was in prison the Lord Chief Baron, at the table at Serjeant's Inn, before the rest of the judges, gave such a character of me openly, without fear of any man's displeasure, as is not fit for me to own or recite, who was so much revered by the rest (who were every one strangers to me, save by hearsay) that I believe it much settled their resolutions. . . .

My *habeas corpus*, being demanded at the Common Pleas, was granted, and a day appointed for my appearance. But when I came, the judges, I believe, having not before studied the Oxford Act when Judge Wild had first said, "I hope you will not use to trouble this court with such causes," asked whether the king's council had been acquainted with the case and seen the order of the court; which being denied, I was remanded back to prison, and a new day set. They suffered me not to stand at the bar, but called me up on the table (which was an unusual respect); and they sent me not to the Fleet, as is usual, but to the same prison, which was a greater favour.

When I came next, the Lord Chief Justice, coming towards Westminster Hall, went into Whitehall by the way, which caused much talk among the people. When he came Judge Wild began, and having showed that he was no friend to conventicles, opened the Act, and then opened many defaults in the *mittimus*, for which he pronounced it invalid; but in civility to the justices said that the Act was so penned that it was a very hard thing to draw up a *mittimus* by it (which was no compliment to the parliament). Judge Archer next spake largely against the *mittimus*, without any word of disparagement to the main cause. And so did Judge Tyrell after him (I will not be so tedious as to recite their arguments). Judge Vaughan concluded in the same manner, but with these two singularities above the rest:

1. That he made it an error in the *mittimus* that the witnesses were not named. . . .

2. When he had done with the cause he made a speech

to the people and told them . . . that though he understood that Mr. Baxter was a man of great learning and of a good life, yet he having this singularity, the law was against conventicles, and it was only upon the error of the warrant that he was released. . . .

Being discharged of my imprisonment my sufferings began; for I had there better health than I had of a long time before or after. I had now more exasperated the authors of my imprisonment; I was not at all acquit as to the main cause; they might amend their *mittimus* and lay me in again. . . I had now a great house of great rent on my hands which I must not come to. I had no house to dwell in; I knew not what to do with all my goods and family. I must go out of Middlesex; I must not come within five miles of city, corporation, etc.; where to find such a place, and therein a house, and how to remove my goods thither, and what to do with my house the while, till my time expired, were more trouble than my quiet prison by far, and the consequence yet worse. . . .

When the same justices saw that I was thus discharged, they were not satisfied to have driven me from Acton, but they make a new *mittimus*, by Counsel, as for the same (supposed) fault, naming the fourth of June as the day on which I preached, and yet not naming any witness (when the Act against conventicles was expired long before). And this *mittimus* they put into an officer's hands in London, to bring me not to Clerkenwell, but among the thieves and murderers, to the common jail at Newgate, which was since the fire (which burnt down all the better rooms) the most noisome place that I have heard of (except the Tower dungeon) of any prison in the land.

CHAPTER III

RESIDENCE AT TOTTERIDGE

Dr. Owen—Metaphysics—Exasperation of Kidderminster flock and their separation—New offer of bishopric—Concerning melancholy—Analysis and sublimation—Declaration of Indulgence.

1669–1672

THE next habitation which God's providence chose for me was at Totteridge, near Barnet, where for a year I was fain, with part of my family separated from the rest, to take a few mean rooms, which were so extremely smoky, and the place withal so cold, that I spent the winter in great pain, one-quarter of a year by a sore sciatica and seldom free from such anguish. . . .

About this time (1669) I heard Dr. Owen talked very yieldingly of a concord between the Independents and Presbyterians (which all seemed willing of). I had before, about 1658, written somewhat in order to reconciliation; and I did (by the invitation of his speeches) offer it to Mr. Geo. Griffiths to be considered. And near a twelvemonth after he gave it me again, without taking notice of anything in it. I now resolved to try once more with Dr. Owen. And though all our business with each other had been contradiction, I thought it my duty, without any thoughts of former things, to go to him and be a seeker of peace: which he seemed to take well, and expressed great desires of concord, and also many moderate concessions, and how heartily he would concur in anything that tended to a good agreement. I told him that I must deal freely with him, that when I thought of what he had done formerly, I was much afraid lest one that had been so great a breaker would not be made an instrument in healing. But in other respects I thought him the fittest man in England for this work; partly because he could understand the case, and partly because his experience of the humours of men and of the mischiefs of dividing

principles and practices had been so very great, that, if experience should make any man wise and fit for a healing work, it should be him. And that a book which he had lately written (a *Catechism for Independency*), offensive to others, was my chief motive to make this motion to him; because he there giveth up two of the worst of the principles of popularity, acknowledging:

1. That the people have not the power of the keys.
2. That they give not the power of the keys or their office-power to the pastors. . . .

After this I waited on him at London again, and he came once to me to my lodgings, when I was in town (near him). And he told me that he received my chiding letter, and perceived that I suspected his reality in the business; but he was so hearty in it that I should see that he really meant as he spake, concluding in these words, "You shall see it, and my practice shall reproach your diffidence." . . .

About a month after I went to him again, and he had done nothing, but was still hearty for the work. And to be short, I thus waited on him time after time, till my papers had been near a year and a quarter in his hand, and then I desired him to return them to me, which he did with these words, "I am still a well-wisher to those mathematics," without any other words about them, or ever giving me any more exception against them. And this was the issue of my third attempt for union with the Independents.

Having long (upon the suspension of my *Aphorisms*) been purposing to draw up a method of theology, I now began it. I never yet saw a scheme or method of physics or theology which gave any satisfaction to my reason. . . . I had been twenty-six years convinced that dichotomising will not do it, but that the Divine Trinity in Unity hath expressed itself in the whole frame of nature and morality. And I had so long been thinking of a true method and making some small attempts, but I found myself insufficient for it, and so continued only thinking of it and studying it all these years. . . .

The nature of things convinced me that as physics are presupposed in ethics, and that morality is but the ordering of the rational nature and its actions, so that part of physics and metaphysics which opened the Nature of Man and of God, which are the parties contracting, and the

great subjects of theology and morality, is more nearly pertinent to a method of theology, and should have a larger place in it than is commonly thought and given to it. Yet I knew how uncouth it would seem to put so much of these doctrines into a body of divinity. But the three first chapters of Genesis assured me that it was the Scripture method. And when I had drawn up one scheme of the Creation, and sent it the Lord Chief Baron (because of our often communication on such subjects, and being now banished from his neighbourhood and the county where he lived), he received it with so great approbation, and importuned me so by letters to go on with that work, and not to fear being too much on philosophy, as added somewhat to my inclinations and resolutions. And through the great mercy of God, in my retirement at Totteridge, in a troublesome, poor, smoky, suffocating room, in the midst of daily pains of the sciatica, and many worse, I set upon and finished all the schemes and half the elucidations in the end of the year 1669 and the beginning of 1670, which cost me harder studies than anything that ever I had before attempted. . . .

At this time also, one Hinckley, of Northfield, near Worcestershire, desiring to be taken notice of, wrote a virulent book against the Nonconformists, and particularly some falsehoods against me, and a vehement invitation to me to publish the reasons of my Nonconformity, when he could not be so utterly ignorant as not to know that I could never get such an apology licensed, and that the law forbade me to print it unlicensed, and that he himself taketh it for a sin to break the law. But such impudent persons were still clamouring against us.

By this time my own old flock at Kidderminster began (some of them) to censure me. For when the bishop, and deans, and many of the curates, had preached long to make the people think me a deceiver, as if this had been the only way to their salvation, the people were hereby so much alienated from them that they took them for men unreasonable, and little better than mad; insomuch as that they grew more alienated from prelacy than ever. Also, while they continued to repeat sermons in their houses together, many of them were laid long in jails (among thieves and common malefactors), which increased

their exasperations yet more. They continued their meetings whilst their goods were seized on, and they were fined and punished again and again. These sufferings so increased their aversion¹ that, my book against church-divisions coming out at such a time, and a Preface which I put before a book of Dr. Bryan's, in which I do but excuse his speaking against separation, they were many of them offended at it as unseasonable; and judging by feeling, interest and passion, were angry with me for strengthening the hands of persecutors, as they call it; whereas if I had called the bishops all that's nought, I am confident they would not have blamed me. And they that fell out with the bishops for casting me out, and speaking ill of me, were (some of them) ready to speak ill of me, if not to cast me off, because I did but persuade them of the lawfulness of communicating in their parish-church, with a conformable minister, in the liturgy. . . .

Upon the publication of my book against divisions and the rumour of my conforming, the Earl of Lauderdale invited me to speak with him, where he opened to me the purpose of taking off the oath of canonical obedience and all impositions of Conformity in Scotland, save only that it should be necessary to sit in presbyteries and synods with the bishops and moderators (there being already no liturgy, ceremonies or subscription save only to the doctrine of the Church). Hereupon he expressed his great kindness to me and told me he had the king's consent to speak with me, and being going into Scotland he offered me what place in Scotland I would choose, either a church, or a college in the university, or a bishopric. . . .

In the beginning of December 1670, the Duke of Ormond, as he was returning home to Clarendon House in the night, was seized on by six men, who set him on horseback to have carried him away. But he was rescued before they could accomplish it.

Shortly after, some of his majesty's life-guard surprised Sir John Coventry, a member of the House of Commons, and cut his nose, which occasioned a great heat in the House and at last that Act which is newly passed for preventing of the like. Many murders and outrages and cutting of noses were committed also on other persons.

¹ = aversion.

But the greatest noise was made by certain dukes and lords that went in a torrent of joviality to a defamed house in a street called Whetstone Park, and when the wretched women cried for help, the beadle came in with some watchmen, and they killed him presently. Whilst such things went on, the House of Commons was busy about an Act to make all forbidden meetings for God's worship, preaching and praying by the silenced ministers to be severelier yet punished as routs and riots.

There happened a great rebuke to the nobility and gentry of Dublin in Ireland, which is related in their *Gazette* in these words: "Dublin, December 27. Yesterday happened here a very unfortunate accident. Most of the nobility and gentry being at a play, at a public playhouse, the upper galleries on a sudden fell all down, beating down the second, which together with all the people that were in them fell into the pit and lower boxes. His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, with his lady, happened to be there, but, thanks be to God, escaped the danger without any harm, part of the box where they were remaining firm, and so resisting the fall from above; only his two sons were found quite buried under the timber. The younger had received but little hurt, but the eldest was taken up dead to all appearance, but having presently been let blood, etc., recovered. There were many dangerously hurt, and seven or eight killed outright."

So far the *Gazette*. About seventeen or eighteen died then, and of their wounds. The first letters that came to London of it filled the city with the report that it was a play in scorn of godliness, and that I was the person acted by the scorner as a Puritan, and that he that represented me was set in the stocks, when the fall was, and his leg broke. But the play was Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, with a sense¹ added for the times, in which the Puritan is called a Banbury man, and I cannot learn that I was named nor meddled with more than others of my condition, unless by the actor's dress they made any such reflecting intimations. . . .

This same year, 1671, I was desired by my friend and neighbour, Mr. John Corbet, to write somewhat to satisfy a good man that was fallen into deep melancholy, feeding

¹ ? scene.

it daily with the thoughts of the number that will be damned, and tempted by it to constant blasphemy against the goodness of God, who could save them and would not, but decreed their damnation. And I wrote a few sheets called *The Vindication of God's Goodness*, which Mr. Corbet with a prefixed epistle published. . . .

Also one Dr. Edward Fowler (a very ingenious, sober Conformist) wrote two books: one an apology for the Latitudinarians, as they were then called, the other entitled *Holiness the Design of Christianity*, in which he sometimes put in the word "only," which gave offence, and the book seemed to some to have a scandalous design, to obscure the glory of *free justification* under pretence of extolling *holiness* as the *only* design of man's redemption; which occasioned a few sheets of mine on the said book and question for reconciliation, and clearing up of the point; which when Mr. Fowler saw, he wrote to me to tell me that he was of my judgment, only he had delivered that more generally which I opened more particularly, and that the word "only" was hyperbolically spoken, as I had said; but he spake feelingly against those quarrelsome men that are readier to censure than to understand. I returned him some advice to take heed lest their weakness and censoriousness should make him too angry and impatient with religious people, as the prelates are, and so run into greater sin than theirs, and favour a looser party because they are less censorious. To which he returned me so ingenious¹ and hearty thanks, as for as great kindness as ever was showed him, as told me that free and friendly counsel to wise and good men is not lost.

I was troubled this year with multitudes of melancholy persons from several parts of the land, some of high quality, some of low, some very exquisitely learned, some unlearned (as I had in a great measure been above twenty years before). I know not how it came to pass, but if men fell melancholy, I must hear from them or see them (more than any physician that I know); which I mention only for these three uses to the reader, that out of all their cases I have gathered: (1) That we must very much take heed lest we ascribe melancholy phantasms and passions to God's Spirit; for they are strange apprehensions that

¹ = ingenuous.

melancholy can cause (though Bagshaw revile me for such an intimation, as if it were injurious to the Holy Ghost). (2) I would warn all young persons to live modestly, and keep at a sufficient distance from objects that tempt them to carnal lust, and to take heed of wanton dalliance and the beginnings or approaches of this sin, and that they govern their thoughts and senses carefully. For I can tell them by the sad experience of many, that venerous crimes leave deep wounds in the conscience; and that those that were never guilty of fornication are oft cast into long and lamentable troubles by letting Satan once into their fantasies, from whence till objects are utterly distant he is hardly got out; especially when they are guilty of voluntary active self-pollution. But above all I warn young students and apprentices to avoid the beginnings of these sins; for their youthfulness and idleness are oft the incentives of it, when poor labouring men are in less danger; and they little know what one spark may kindle. (3) I advise all men to take heed of placing religion too much in fears and tears and scruples, or in any other kind of sorrow, but such as tendeth to raise us to a high estimation of Christ, and to the magnifying of grace, and a sweeter taste of the love of God, and to the firmer resolution against sin. And that tears and grief be not commended inordinately for themselves, nor as mere signs of a converted person. And that we call men more to look after *duty* than after *signs* as such; set self-love on work and spare not; so you will call them much more to the love of God, and let them know that that love is their best sign, but yet to be exercised on a higher reason than as a sign of our own hopes; for that motive alone will not produce true love to God. And as the Antinomians too much exclude humiliation and signs of grace, so too many of late have made their religion to consist too much in the seeking of these out of their proper time and place, without referring them to that obedience, love and joy in which true religion doth principally consist.

Reader, I do but transcribe these three counsels for thee from a multitude of melancholy persons' sad experiences. . . .

The parliament having made the laws against Nonconformists' preaching and private religious meetings, etc., so grinding and terrible as aforesaid, the king (who consented

to those laws) became the sole patron of the Nonconformists' liberties; not by any abatements by law, but by his own connivance as to the execution, the magistrates for the most part doing what they perceived to be his will. So that Sir Rich. Ford, all the time of his mayoralty in London (though supposed one of their greatest and most knowing adversaries), never disturbed them. . . .

Mr. Bagshaw (in his rash and ignorant zeal, thinking it a sin to hear a Conformist, and that the way to deal with the persecutors was to draw all the people as far from them as we could, and not to hold any communion with any that did conform), having printed his third reviling libel against me, called for my third reply, which I entitled *The Church told of, etc.* But being printed without licence, Lestrangle, the searcher, surprised part of it in the press (there being lately greater penalties laid on them that print without licence than ever before). And about the day that it came out Mr. Bagshaw died (a prisoner, though not in prison). Which made it grievous to me to think that I must seem to write against the dead. While we wrangle here in the dark, we are dying and passing to the world that will decide all our controversies. And the safest passage thither is by *peaceable holiness*.

This year, a new playhouse being built in Salisbury Court in Fleet Street, called the Duke of York's, the lord mayor (as is said) desired of the king that it might not be, the youth of the city being already so corrupted by sensual pleasures; but he obtained not his desire. And this Jan., 1671, the king's playhouse in Drury Lane took fire and was burnt down, but not alone, for about fifty or sixty houses adjoining, by fire and blowing up, accompanied it. . . .

This year the king began the war upon the Dutch, in March 167 $\frac{1}{2}$. About the sixteenth or seventeenth day was a hot sea-fight, while our ships assaulted their Smyrna fleet of merchants, and many on both sides were killed, which was most that was done. And about the eighteenth day the king published a proclamation for war by sea and land, the French, the Elector of Cologne and the Bishop of Munster being with dreadful preparations to invade them by land.

Now came forth a Declaration giving some fuller exposition (to those that doubted of it) of the transactions of

these twelve years last, viz., his majesty, by virtue of his supreme power in matters ecclesiastical, suspendeth all penal laws thereabout, and declareth that he will grant a convenient number of public meeting-places to men of all sorts that conform not; so be it:

(1) The persons be by him approved.
(2) That they never meet in any place not approved by him.

(3) And there set open the doors to all comers.

(4) And preach not seditiously.

(5) Nor against the discipline or government of the Church of England, saving that the Papists shall have no other public places but their houses (anywhere, under their own government), without limitation or restriction, to any number of places or persons, or any necessity of getting approbation; so that they are immediately in possession of a securer and fuller liberty than the Protestant-Nonconformists hope for; for how, or when they will get churches built, we know not; till that be done they are more terribly restrained from meeting than before. And who will build churches that have no security to enjoy them one week, time will show. And all this is said to be for avoiding the danger of conventicles in private, etc., when yet the Papists are allowed such conventicles in as many houses as they please.

This question, whether toleration of us in our different assemblies or such an abatement of impositions as would restore some ministers to the public assemblies by a law, were more desirable, was a great controversy then among the Nonconformists; and greater it had been, but that the hopes of abatements (called then a Comprehension) were so low as made them the less concerned in the agitation of it. But whenever there was a new session of parliament, which put them in some little hope of abatements, the controversy began to revive, according to the measure of those hopes. The Independents, and all the sectaries and some few Presbyterians, especially in London, who had large congregations and liberty and encouragement, were rather for a toleration. The rest of the Presbyterians and the Episcopal Nonconformists were for abatement and comprehension. . . .

In the end of May 1672 was another sea-fight with the

Dutch, with like success as the former. The Earl of Sandwich and others of ours lost, and they parted without any notable victory or advantage of either party, but that they had killed one another.

In May and June the French suddenly took abundance of the Dutch garrisons.

In July and August the Dutch rabble tumultuously rose up against their governors, for the Prince of Orange, and murdered De Wit and his brother. . . .

On 11 Octob. I fell into a dangerous fit of sickness, which God in his wonted mercy did in time so far remove as to return me to some capacity of service.

CHAPTER IV

A MERE CHRISTIAN

*Withdrawal of Declaration of Indulgence—
Dr. Gunning's jibe.*

1672

I HAD till now forborne, for several reasons, to seek a licence for preaching from the king, upon the toleration. But when all others had taken theirs, and were settled in London and other places as they could get opportunity, I delayed no longer, but sent to seek one, on condition I might have it without the title of Independent, Presbyterian, or any other party, but only as a Nonconformist. And before I sent, Sir Thomas Player, Chamberlain of London, had procured it me so, without my knowledge or endeavour. I sought none so long:

1. Because I was unwilling to be or seem any cause of that way of liberty, if a better might have been had, and therefore would not meddle in it.

2. I lived ten miles from London, and thought not just to come and set up a congregation there, till the ministers had fully settled theirs who had borne the burden there in the times of the raging plague and fire and other calamities; lest I should draw away any of their auditors and hinder their maintenance.

3. I perceived that no one (that ever I heard of till mine) could get a licence unless he would be entitled in it a Presbyterian, Independent, Anabaptist, or of some sect.

The 19th of Novemb. (my baptism-day) was the first day after ten years' silence that I preached in a tolerated public assembly (though not yet tolerated in any consecrated church), but only (against law) in my own house.

Some merchants set up a Tuesday's lecture in London, to be kept by six ministers at Pinner's Hall, allowing them twenty shillings apiece each sermon; of whom they chose me to be one. But when I had preached there but four sermons, I found the Independents so quarrelsome with what I said that all the city did ring of their backbitings

and false accusations. . . It was cried abroad among all the party that I preached up Arminianism and free-will, and man's power, and O! what an odious crime was this.

January 24, 167 $\frac{2}{3}$, I began a Friday lecture at Mr. Turner's church in New Street, near Fetter Lane, with great convenience and God's encouraging blessing, but I never took a penny of money for it of anyone. . . Nor did I ever yet give the Sacrament to any one person but to my old flock at Kidderminster. I see it offendeth the Conformists, and hath many other present inconveniences while we have any hope of restoration and concord from the parliament.

About this time Cornet Castle, in Jersey, was by lightning strangely torn to pieces and blown up, which was attended with many notable accidents, an account whereof was published.

The parliament met again in February, and voted down the king's Declaration as illegal. And the king promised them that it should not be brought into precedent. And thereupon they consulted of a bill for the ease of Non-conformists or Dissenters, and many of them highly professed their resolution to carry it on. But when they had granted the tax, they turned it off and left it undone, destroying our shelter of the king's Declaration, and so leaving us to the storm of all their severe laws, which some country justices rigorously executed, but the most forbore.

On February 20, I took my house in Bloomsbury, in London, and removed thither after Easter with my family, God having mercifully given me three years' great peace among quiet neighbours at Totteridge, and much more health or ease than I expected, and some opportunity to serve him.

The parliament sat again, and talked as if they would have united us by abatement of some of their impositions. But when they had voted down the king's Declaration of toleration as illegal, and he had promised them that it should never be drawn into a precedent, and that they had granted a large tax, they frustrated the hopes they had raised in some credulous men, and left all as they found it. . . .

About the beginning of May, in my walk in the fields,

I met with Dr. Gunning, now Bishop of Chichester (with whom I had the contention and fierce opposition to all the motions of peace at the Savoy); and at his invitation went after to his lodgings, to pursue our begun discourse; which he vehemently professed that he was sure that it was not conscience that kept us from Conformity, but merely to keep up our reputation with the people, and we desired alterations for no other ends; and that we lost nothing by our Nonconformity, but were fed as full and lived as much to the pleasure of the flesh in plenty as the Conformists did; and let me know what odious thoughts he had of his poor brethren, upon grounds so notoriously false that I had thought few men that lived in England could have been so ignorant of such matters of fact. But alas, what is there so false and odious which exasperated factious, malicious minds will not believe and say of others? And what evidence so notorious which they will not outface? I told him that he was a stranger to the men he talked of; that those of my acquaintance (whom he confessed to be far more than of his) were generally the most conscionable men that I could find on earth. . . . And as for the plenty and fullness which they upbraid us with, it telleth us that there is nothing so immodest and unreasonable which some men's malice will not say. Do they not know into what poverty London is brought by the late fire and want of trade? And what complaints do fill all the land? And how close-handed almost all men are that are themselves in want? And ministers are not so impudent as to turn beggars without shame? I had but a few days before had letters of a worthy minister who, with his wife and six children, had many years had seldom other food than brown rye-bread and water, and was then turned out of his house, and had none to go to. And of another that was fain to spin for his living. And abundance I know that have families, and nothing or next to nothing of their own, and live in exceeding want upon the poor drops of charity which they stoop to receive from a few mean people. . . . And the bishop had the less modesty in standing confidently to my face of his certainty of our losing nothing by our Nonconformity, when he himself knew that I was offered a bishopric in 1660 and he got not his bishopric (for all his extraordinary way of merit)

till about 1671 or 1672; and I had not a groat of the ecclesiastical maintenance since the king came in. . . In sum, I told the bishop that he that cried out so vehemently against schism had got the spirit of a sectary; and as those that by prisons and other sufferings were too much exasperated against the bishops could hardly think or speak well of them, so his cross interests had so notoriously spoiled him of his charity that he had plainly the same temper with the bitterest of the sectaries whom he so much reviled. . . .

In June was the second great fight with the Dutch, where again many were killed on both sides; and to this day it is not known which party had the greater loss.

The parliament grew into great jealousies of the prevalency of Popery. There was an army raised, which lay upon Blackheath encamped, as for service against the Dutch. They said that so many of the commanders were Papists as made men fear the design was worse. Men feared not to talk openly that the Papists, having no hope of getting the parliament to set up their religion by law, did design to take down parliaments and reduce the government to the French model, and religion to their state, by a standing army. These thoughts put men into dismal expectations, and many wish that the army at any rate might be disbanded. The Duke of York was General. The parliament made an Act that no man should be in any office of trust who would not take the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance and receive the Sacrament according to the order of the Church of England, and renounce Transubstantiation. Many supposed Papists received the Sacrament and renounced Transubstantiation and took the oaths. Some that were known, sold or laid down their places. The Duke of York and the new Lord Treasurer, Clifford, laid down all. It was said they did it on supposition that the Act left the king empowered to renew their commissions when they had laid them down. But the Lord Chancellor told the king that it was not so; and so they were put out by themselves. This settled men in the full belief that the Duke of York and the Lord Clifford were Papists; and the Londoners had before a special hatred against the duke, since the burning of London, commonly saying that divers were taken casting

fire-balls and brought to his guards of soldiers to be secured, and he let them go, and both secured and concealed them. . .

In June, Maestricht was taken by the French, but with much loss, where the Duke of Monmouth, with the English, had great honour for their valour.

In August, four of the Dutch East India ships fell into our hands, and we had the third great sea-fight with them, under the command of Prince Rupert, where we again killed each other with equal loss. But the Dutch said they had the victory now, and before, and kept days of thanksgiving for it. Sir Edward Sprag was killed, whose death the Papists much lamented, hoping to have got the sea-power into his hands. But Prince Rupert (who declared himself openly against Popery and had got great interest in the hearts of the soldiers) complained sharply of the French admiral, as deserting him (to say no worse). And the success of these fights was such as hindered the transportation of the army against the Dutch, and greatly divided the court-party, and discouraged the grandees and commanding Papists, etc.

In September, I being out of town, my house was broken into by thieves, who broke open my study-doors, closets, locks, searched near forty tills and boxes, and found them all full of nothing but papers, and missed that little money I had, though very near them. They took only three small pieces of plate and meddled not (considerably) with any of my papers, which I would not have lost for many hundred pounds, which made me sensible of divine protection, and what a convenience it is to have such a kind of treasure as other men have no mind to rob us of or cannot.

The Duke of York was now married to the Duke of Modena's daughter by proxy, the Earl of Peterborough being sent over to that end. . . .

I had fourteen years been both a necessary and voluntary stranger at the court; but at this time, by another's invitation, called to attend the Duke of Lauderdale, who still professed special kindness to me, and some pious Scotsmen (being under suffering, one absconding, another sequestered and undone), and craving my interposition for them, I went to him, and desired his pardon and clemency for them, which he readily granted. . . . I would not in pride deny any man his due honour nor be so

uncharitable as to refuse to make use of any man's favour for sufferers in their distress. The matters of their state counsels are above my reach. . . .

On the 20th of October the parliament met again, and suddenly voted that the king should be sent to about the Duke of York's marriage with an Italian Papist (akin to the pope), and to desire that it might be stopped (he being not yet come over). And as soon as they had done that, the king, by the chancellor, prorogued them till Monday following, because it is not usual for a parliament to grant money twice in one session.

On Monday, when they met, the king desired speedy aid of money against the Dutch, and the Lord Chancellor set forth the reasons and the Dutch unreasonableness. But the parliament still stuck to their former resentment of the Duke of York's marriage and renewed their message to the king against it; who answered them that it was debated at the open council, and resolved that it was too late to stop it. . . .

On Friday, October 31, the parliament went so high as to pass a vote that no more money should be given till the eighteen months of the last tax were expired, unless the Dutch proved obstinate and unless we were secured against the danger of Popery and popish counsellors, and their grievances were redressed.

The parliament voted to ask of his majesty a day of humiliation because of the growth of Popery, and intended solemnly to keep the powder-plot, and appointed Dr. Stillingfleet to preach to them (who is most engaged by writing against Popery); but on the day before, being Nov. 4, the king (to their great discontent) prorogued the parliament to Jan. 7.

The seventh of January the parliament met again, and voted that their first work should be to prevent Popery, redress grievances and be secured against the instruments or counsellors of them. And they shortly after voted the Dukes of Buckingham and Lauderdale unfit for trust about the king, and desired their removal. But when they came to the Lord Arlington, and would have accordingly characterised him without an impeachment, it was carried against that attempt. And because the members who favoured the Nonconformists (for considerable reasons)

were against the rest, and helped off the Lord Arlington, the rest were greatly exasperated against him, and reported that they did it because he had furthered the Nonconformists' licences for tolerated preaching.

Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper (sometime one of Oliver's Privy Council), having been a great favourite of the king (for great service for him), and made Earl of Shaftesbury and Lord Chancellor, and great in the secretest councils, at last openly set against others on the account of religion, earnestly declaiming against Popery, and becoming the head of the party that were zealous for the Protestant cause, and awakened the nation greatly by his activity. And being quickly put out of his place of chancellorship, he by his bold and skilful way of speaking so moved the House of Lords that they began to speak higher against the danger of Popery than the Commons, and to pass several votes accordingly. And the Earl of Shaftesbury spake so plainly of the Duke of York, as much offended, and it was supposed would not long be borne. The Earl of Clare, the Lord Hollis, the Lord Halifax and others also spake very freely; and among the bishops only (that I heard of) Sir Herbert Croft (who had sometime been a Papist), the Bishop of Hereford. And now among the Lords and Commons, and citizens, and clergy, the talk went uncontrolled that the Duke of York was certainly a Papist, and that the army lately raised and encamped at Blackheath was designed to do their work, who at once would take down parliaments and set up Popery. . . In a word, the offence and boldness of both Houses grew so high as easily showed men how the former war began, and silenced many that said it was raised by Nonconformists and Presbyterians.

The third of February was a public fast (against Popery); the first (as I remember) that (besides the anniversary fasts) had ever been since this parliament sat (which hath now sat longer than that called the Long Parliament did before the major part were cast out by Cromwell). But the preachers, Dr. Cradock and Dr. Whichcot, meddled but little with that business, and did not please them as Dr. Stillingfleet had done, who greatly animated them and all the nation against Popery by his open and diligent endeavours for the Protestant cause. . . .

But on Feb. 24 all these things were suddenly ended, the king early, suddenly and unexpectedly proroguing the parliament till November. Whereby the minds of both Houses were much troubled, and multitudes greatly exasperated and alienated from the court; of whom many now saw that the leading bishops had been the great causes of our distractions; but others, hating the Nonconformists more, were still as hot for prelacy and their violence as ever.

All this while the aspiring sort of Conformists, that looked for preferment, and the chaplains that lived in fullness, and other malignant factious clergymen, did write and preach to stir up king, parliament and others to violence and cruelty against the liberty and blood of the Nonconformists, who lived quietly by them in labour and poverty, and meddled not with them (besides their necessary dissent). . . .

The Lord's-day before the parliament was dissolved, one of these prelatists preached to them to persuade them that we are obstinate and not to be tolerated nor cured by any means but vengeance, urging them to set fire to the faggot, and teach us by scourges or scorpions, and open our eyes with gall. Yet none of these men will procure us leave to publish or offer to authority the reasons of our nonconformity. But this is not the first proof that a carnal, worldly, proud, ungodly clergy, who never were serious in their own professed belief nor felt the power of what they preach, have been, in most ages of the Church, its greatest plague and the greatest hinderers of holiness and concord by making their formalities and ceremonies the test of holiness, and their worldly interest and domination the only cement of concord. . . .

CHAPTER V

SPIES AND INFORMERS

St. James's Market-House—A narrow escape—Keting, the informer—Fines and imprisonments—Burnet and Lauderdale—With Richard Berisford.

1674

TAKING it to be my duty to preach while toleration doth continue, I removed the last spring to London, where, my diseases increasing, this winter a flatulent, constant headache added to the rest, and continuing strong for about half a year, constrained me to cease my Friday's lecture and an afternoon sermon on the Lord's-days in my house, to my grief; and to preach only one sermon a week at St. James's Market-House, where some had hired an inconvenient place. . . .

Yet at this time did some of the most learned Conformists assault me with sharp accusations of schism, merely because I ceased not to preach the Gospel of Christ to people in such necessity. They confess that I ought not to take their oaths, and make their imposed covenants, declarations and subscriptions, against my conscience; but my preaching is my sin which I must forbear (though they accuse me not of one word that I say). . . . And I show them that I myself have the licence of the bishop of this diocese, as well as episcopal ordination; and that my licence is in force and not recalled; and that I have the king's licence; and therefore, after all this, to obey these silencers (nay, no bishop doth forbid me, otherwise than as his vote is to the Acts of Parliament, which is as magistrates), and to fulfil their will that will be content with nothing but our forsaking of poor souls and ceasing to preach Christ, this were no better than to end my life of comfortable labours in obeying the devil, the enemy of Christ and souls; which God forbid.

Yet will not all this satisfy these men, but they cry out, as the Papists, "schism, schism," unless we will cease to preach the Gospel. . .

On July 5 (1674), at our meeting over St. James's Market-House, God vouchsafed us a great deliverance. A main beam, before weakened by the weight of the people, so cracked that three times they ran in terror out of the room, thinking it was falling. But remembering the like at Dunstan's West, I reproved their fear as causeless. But the next day, taking up the boards we found that two rents in the beam were so great that it was a wonder of Providence that the floor had not fallen, and the roof with it, to the destruction of multitudes. The Lord make us thankful. . . .

It pleased God to give me marvellous great encouragement in my preaching at St. James's. The crack having frightened away most of the richer sort (specially the women), most of the congregation were young men of the most capable age, who heard with very great attention, and many that had not come to church of many years received so much and manifested so great a change (some Papists and divers others returning public thanks to God for their conversion) as made all my charge and trouble easy to me. . . .

While I was thus murmured at by backbiters, sectaries and prelatists, when the king's licences were recalled. I was the first that was apprehended by warrant and brought before the justices as a Conventicler. One Keting, an ignorant fellow, had got a warrant, as bailiff and informer, to search after conventicles¹ (Papists and Protestants), which he prosecuted with great animosity and violence. Having then left St. James's (the lease of the house being out), I preached only on Thursdays at Mr. Turner's; and by the Act I am to be judged by a justice of the city or division where I preach, but to be distrained on by warrant from a justice of the division or county where I live. So that the preaching-place being in the city, only a city justice might judge me. Keting went to many of the city justices, and none of them would grant him a warrant against me. Therefore he went to the justices of the county who lived near me, and one Sir John Medlicot, and Mr Bennet (brother to the Lord Arlington), ignorant of the law herein, gave their warrant to apprehend me and bring

¹ ? Conventiclors. There is no apostrophe after Papists or Protestants, but such an omission is common. See p. 232 for liability of "owner of the place."

me before them or some other of his majesty's justices. The constable and informer gave me leave to choose what justices I would go to. I went with them to seek divers of the best justices, and could find none of them at home, and so spent that day (in a case of pain and great weakness) in being carried up and down in vain. But I used the informer kindly, and spake that to him which his conscience (though a very ignorant fellow) did not well digest. The next day I went with the constable and him to Sir William Poultney, who made him show his warrant, which was signed by Henry Montague (son to the late worthy Earl of Manchester), as Bailiff of Westminster, enabling him to search after mass-priests and conventiclers; but I hear of no mass-priests save one that was ever meddled with to this day, and that one delivered (as we all desired). Sir William showed him and all the company, in the Act, that none but a city justice had power to judge me for a sermon preached in the city; and so the informer was defeated. As I went out of the house I met the Countess of Warwick and the Lady Lucy Montague, sister to the said Mr. Henry Montague, and told them of the case and warrant, who assured me that he whose hand was at it knew nothing of it; and some of them sent to him, and Keting's warrant was called in within two or three days. But it proved that one Mr. Barwell, Sub-Bailiff of Westminster, was he that set Keting on work and gave him his warrant and told him how good a service it was to the Church and what he might gain by it. And Barwell sharply chid Keting for doing his work with me no more skilfully. And the Lord of Arlington most sharply chid his brother for granting his warrant. And within a few days Mr. Barwell, riding the circuit, was cast by his horse and died in the very fall. And Sir John Medlicot, and his brother, a few weeks after, lay both dead in his house together. Shortly after, Keting came several times to have spoken with me, to ask me forgiveness, and, not meeting with me, went to my friends in the city with the same words (when a little before he had boasted how many hundred pounds he would have of the city-justices for refusing him justice). At last he found me within, and would have fallen down on his knees to me, and asked me earnestly to forgive him. I asked him what had changed his mind.

He told me that his conscience had no peace from the hour that he troubled me; and that it increased his disquiet that no justice would hear nor one constable of forty execute the warrant, and all the people cried out against him. But that which set home was Mr. Barwell's death (for Sir John Medlicot's he knew not of). I exhorted the man to a universal repentance and reformation of life, and he told me he would never meddle in such businesses, nor trouble any man, and promised to live better himself than he had done. . . .

The informers of the city (set on work by the bishops) were watching my preaching and contriving to load me with divers convictions and fines at once. And they found an alderman justice, even in the ward where I preached, fit for their design, one Sir Thomas Davis, who understood not the law, but was ready to serve the prelates in their own way. To him oath was made against me, and the place where I preached, as for two sermons, which came to threescore pounds fine to me and fourscore to the owner of the place where we assembled. But I only was sought after and prosecuted. . . .

When I understood that the design was to ruin me, by heaping up convictions before I was heard to speak for myself, I went to Sir Thomas Davis and told him that I undertook to prove that I broke not the law, and desired him that he would pass no judgment till I had spoke for myself before my accusers. But I found him so ignorant of the law as to be fully persuaded that, if the informers did but swear in general that I kept "an unlawful meeting in pretence of a religious exercise in other manner than according to the liturgy and practice of the Church of England," he was bound to take this general oath for proof, and to record a judgment; and so that the accusers were indeed the judges, and not he. . . .

But the justice retracted not his judgment, but delayed a month or more to give out his warrant to distrain, though I daily look when they take my books (for they will find but little else). Though both justice and accusers have, before witness, confessed that they cannot prove me guilty, but one professeth to go on the belief of the recorder and the other of the archbishop. . . .

But God hath more mercy on these ignorant informers

than on the pharisaical instigators of them. For those repent, but no prelate (save one) that I hear of doth repent. One of them that swore against me went the next fast to Radriff, to Mr. Rosewell's church, where a fast was kept, where hearing three ministers pray and preach, his heart was melted, and with tears he lamented his former course, and particularly his accusing me, and seemeth resolved for a new reformed course of life, and is retired from his former company to that end. And a third (the chief) of the informers lately in the streets, with great kindness to me, professed that he would meddle no more (coming by when a half-distracted fellow had struck me on the head with his staff, and furiously reviled at me for preaching, with the titles of rogue, villain, hypocrite, traitor, etc., as the prelatists and Papists often do).

The parliament meeting Apr. 13, they fell first on the Duke of Lauderdale, renewing their desire to the king to remove him from all public employments and trust. His chief accusing witness was Mr. Burnet, late Public Professor of Theology at Glasgow, who said that he asked him whether the Scots army would come into England, and said: "What if the dissenting Scots should rise, an Irish army should cut their throats," etc. But because Mr. Burnet had lately magnified the said duke in an epistle before a published book, many thought his witness now to be more unsavoury and revengeful, everyone judging as they were affected. But the king sent them answer that the words were spoken before his late Act of Pardon, which if he should violate, it might cause jealousies in his subjects, that he might do so also by the Act of Indemnity.

Their next assault was against the Lord Treasurer, who found more friends in the House of Commons, who at last acquitted him.

But the great work was in the House of Lords, where an Act was brought in to impose such an oath on Lords, Commons and magistrates as is imposed by the Oxford Act of confinement on ministers, and like the Corporation Oath. . . .

At last, though the test was carried by the majority, yet those that were against it, with others, prevailed to make so great an alteration of it as made it quite another thing, and turned it to the greatest disadvantage of the bishops

and the greatest accommodation of the cause of the Nonconformists of anything that this parliament hath done. . . .

This declaration and oath thus altered was such as the Nonconformists would have taken if it had been offered them instead of the Oxford Oath, the subscription for Uniformity, the corporation and vestry declaration. But the kingdom must be twelve years racked to distraction, and 1,800 ministers forbidden to preach Christ's gospel, upon pain of utter ruin, and cities and corporations all new-modelled and changed by other kind of oaths and covenants, and when the Lords find the like obtruded on themselves, they reject it as intolerable. . . . But though experience teach some that will no otherwise learn, it is sad with the world when their rulers must learn to govern them at so dear a rate; and countries, cities, churches and the souls of men must pay so dear for their governors' experience. . . .

June 9. Keting, the informer, being commonly detested for prosecuting me, was cast in jail for debt, and wrote to me to endeavour his deliverance, which I did; and in his letters saith, "Sir, I assure you I do verily believe that God hath bestowed all this affliction on me because I was so vile a wretch as to trouble you. And I assure you I never did a thing in my life that hath so much troubled myself as that did. I pray God forgive me. And truly I do not think of any that went that way to work that ever God would favour him with his mercy. And truly without a great deal of mercy from God, I do not think that ever I shall thrive or prosper. And I hope you will be pleased to pray to God for me," etc. . . .

But this week (June 9) Sir Thomas Davis (notwithstanding all his foresaid warnings and confessions) sent his warrants to a justice of the division where I dwell, to distrain on me (upon two judgments) for fifty pounds, for preaching my lecture in New Street. Some Conformists are paid to the value of twenty pounds a sermon for their preaching, and I must pay twenty pounds and forty pounds a sermon for preaching for nothing. O what pastors hath the Church of England, who think it worth all their unwearyed labours and all the odium which they contract from the people to keep such as I am from preaching the gospel of Christ, and to undo us for it as far as they are

able, though these many years they do not (for they cannot) accuse me for one word that ever I preached, nor one action else that I have done, while the greatest of the bishops preach not thrice a year (as their neighbours say) themselves!

The dangerous crack over the Market-House at St. James's put many upon desiring that I had a larger, safer place for meeting. And though my own dullness and great backwardness to troublesome business made me very averse to so great an undertaking, judging that it being in the face of the court it would never be endured, yet the great and uncessant importunity of many (out of a fervent desire of the good of souls) did constrain me to undertake it. And when it was almost finished (in Oxendon Street), Mr. Henry Coventry, one of his majesty's principal secretaries, who had a house joining to it, and was a Member of Parliament, spoke twice against it in the parliament. But no one seconded him. . . .

And that we might do the more good, my wife urged the building of another meeting-place in Bloomsbury for Mr. Read (to be furthered by my sometimes helping him), the neighbourhood being very full of people, rich and poor, that could not come into the parish-church, through the greatness of the parish (and Dr. Bourman, the parish parson, having not preached, prayed, read, or administered sacraments these three or four years).

This week (Jun. 14) many bishops were with the king, who, they say, granted them his commands to put the laws against us in execution. And on Tuesday about twelve or thirteen of them went to dine with the Sheriff of London, Sir Nathaniel Herne, where the business being mentioned, he told them that they could not trade with their neighbours one day and send them to jail the next. . . .

I was so long wearied with keeping my doors shut against them that came to distrain on my goods for preaching, that I was fain to go from my house and to sell all my goods, and to hide my library first and afterwards to sell it. So that if books had been my treasure (and I valued little more on earth), I had now been without a treasure. About twelve years I was driven a hundred miles from them, and when I had paid dear for the carriage, after two or three years I was forced to sell them. And the

prelates, to hinder me from preaching, deprived me also of these private comforts. But God saw that they were my snare. We brought nothing into the world, and we must carry nothing out. The loss is very tolerable.

I was the willinger to part with goods, books and all, that I might have nothing to be distrained, and so go on to preach. And accordingly removing my dwelling to the new chapel which I had built, I purposed to venture there to preach, there being forty thousand persons in the parish (as is supposed) more than can hear in the parish church, who have no place to go to for God's public worship. So that I set not up church against church, but preached to those that must else have none, being loth that London should turn atheists or live worse than infidels. But when I had preached there but once, a resolution was taken to surprise me the next day and send me for six months to the common jail, upon the Act for the Oxford Oath. Not knowing of this, it being the hottest part of the year, I agreed to go for a few weeks into the country, twenty miles off. But the night before I should go I fell so ill that I was fain to send to disappoint both the coach and my intended companion (Mr. Sylvester). And when I was thus fully resolved to stay, it pleased God, after the ordinary coach-hour, that three men, from three parts of the city, met at my house accidentally, just at the same time (almost to a minute), of whom, if anyone had not been there, I had not gone, viz., the coachman again to urge me, Mr. Sylvester, whom I had put off, and Dr. Coxe, who compelled me, and told me else he would carry me into the coach. It proved a special merciful providence of God, for after one week of languishing and pain I had nine weeks' greater ease than ever I expected in this world, and greater comfort in my work, for my good friend Richard Berisford, Esq., clerk of the exchequer, whose importunity drew me to his house, spared for no cost, labour or kindness for my health or service. . .

CHAPTER VI

AFFLICTIONS AND DISTRESSES

Illness and pain—Penn and Quakers—Seddon's mistake—Sir Matthew Hale—Baxter makes a gift of Oxendon Street Chapel to St. Martin's-in-the-Fields—Baxter accused of murder—Titus Oates and "Popish Plot"—Earl of Danby—Dissolution of Cavalier Parliament.

1674-1678

WHAT is before written hath notified that I have lain in above forty years' constant weaknesses and almost constant pains. . . So that I never knew, heard, or read of any man that had near so much. Thirty physicians (at least) all called it nothing but hypochondriac flatulency, and somewhat of a scorbutical malady. Great bleeding at the nose also did emaciate me. . The particular symptoms were more than I can number. . . About the year 1658, finding the inflation much in the membranes of the reins, I suspected the stone, and thought that one of my extreme leanness might possibly feel it. I felt both my kidneys plainly indurate like stone. But never having had a nephritic fit nor stone come from me in my life, and knowing that if that which I felt was stone, the greatness prohibited all medicine that tended to a cure. I thought therefore that it was best for me to be ignorant what it was. And so far was I from melancholy that I soon forgot that I had felt it, even for about fifteen years. . . Constant pain, which nature almost yielded to as victorious, renewed my suspicion of the stone and my old exploration. And feeling my lean back, both the kidneys were greatlier indurate than before, and the membrane so sore to touch, as if nothing but stone were within them. The physicians said that the stone cannot be felt with the hand. I desired four of the chief of them to feel them. They all concluded that it is the kidneys which they felt, and that they are hard (like stone or bone); but what it is they could not tell; but they thought, if both the kidneys had stones so big

as seemed to such feeling, it was impossible but I should be much worse, by vomiting and torment, and not able to preach and go about. . . .

And whether it be a schyrrus or stones (which I doubt not of), I leave to them to tell others who shall dissect my corpse. But sure I am that I have wonderful cause of thankfulness to God, for the ease which I have had these forty years. . . .

I have written this to mind physicians to search deeper when they use to take up with the general hiding names of hypochondriacs and scorbutics, and to caution students. . . .

And at the same time, being driven from home, and having an old licence of the bishop's yet in force, by the countenance of that and the great industry of Mr. Berisford, I had leave and invitation for ten Lord's-days, to preach in the parish-churches round about. The first parish that I preached in, after thirteen years' ejection and prohibition, was Rickmansworth, and after that at Sarrat, at King's Langley, at Chesham, at Chalfont, and at Amersham, and that often twice a day. Those heard that had not come to church of seven years, and two or three thousand heard where scarce a hundred were wont to come, and with so much attention and willingness, as gave me very great hopes that I never spake to them in vain. And thus soul and body had these special mercies. . . .

The countries¹ about Rickmansworth abounding with Quakers, because Mr. W. Penn, their captain, dwelleth there, I was desirous that the poor people should once hear what was to be said for their recovery. Which coming to Mr. Penn's ears, he was forward to a meeting, where we continued speaking to two rooms full of people (fasting) from ten o'clock till five (one lord and two knights and four conformable ministers, besides others, being present, some all the time and some part). The success gave me cause to believe that it was not labour lost. . . .

Whilst this was my employment in the country, my friends at home had got one Mr. Seddon, a Nonconformist of Derbyshire, lately come to the city as a traveller, to preach the second sermon in my new-built chapel. He was told (and overtold) all the danger, and desired not to

¹ ? County.

come if he feared it. I had left word that if he would but step into my house through a door he was in no danger, they having no power to break open any but the meeting-house. While he was preaching, three justices, with soldiers (supposed by Secretary Coventry's sending), came to the door to seize the preacher. They thought it had been I, and had prepared a warrant upon the Oxford Act to send me for six months to the common jail. The good man and two weak honest persons intrusted to have directed him left the house where he was safe, and thinking to pass away, came to the justices and soldiers at the door, and there stood by them till someone said, "This is the preacher." And so they took him, and blotted my name out of the warrant and put in his, though almost every word fitted to my case was false of him. To the Gatehouse he was carried, where he continued almost three months of the six; and being earnestly desirous of deliverance, I was put to charges to accomplish it, and at last (having righteous judges, and the warrant being found faulty) he had an *habeas corpus*, and was freed upon bonds to appear again the next term.

By this means my case was made much worse, for (1) the justices and other prosecutors were the more exasperated against me; (2) and they were now taught to stop every hole in the next warrant (to which I was still as liable as ever). So that I had now no prospect that way of escape. . . .

The town of Northampton lamentably burnt.

An earthquake in divers counties.

My dear friend Sir Matthew Hale, Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, falling into a languishing disease, from which he is not like to recover, resolvedly petitioned for a dismission, and gave up his place, having gone through his employments and gone off the stage with more universal love and honour for his skill, wisdom, piety and resolved justice than ever I heard or read that any Englishman ever did before him, or any magistrate in the world of his rank since the days of the kings of Israel. He resolved, in his weakness, that the place should not be a burden to him nor he to it. And after all his great practice and places, he tells me that with his own inheritance and all, he is not now worth above five hundred pounds *per annum*, so little sought he

after gain. He may most truly be called "The pillar and basis, or ground of justice," as Paul called (not the Church, but) Timothy (in the Church) the "pillar and basis of truth." His digested knowledge in law above all men, and next in philosophy, and much in theology, was very great. His sincere honesty and humility admirable. His garb and house and attendance so very mean and low, and he so resolutely avoided all the diversions and vanities of the world, that he was herein the marvel of his age. Some made it a scandal, but his wisdom chose it for his convenience, that in his age he married a woman of no estate, suitable to his disposition, to be to him as a nurse. He succeeded me in one of the meanest houses that ever I had lived in, and there hath ever since continued with full content, till now that he is going to his native country, in likelihood to die there. It is not the least of my pleasure that I have lived some years in his more than ordinary love and friendship, and that we are now waiting which shall be first in heaven, whither, he saith, he is going with full content and acquiescence in the will of a gracious God, and doubts not but we shall shortly live together. O what a blessed world were this were the generality of magistrates such as he! . . .

When I had been kept a whole year from preaching in the chapel which I built, on the 16th of April, 1676, I began in another, in a tempestuous time, for the necessity of the parish of St. Martin's, where about 60,000 souls have no church to go to nor any public worship of God. "How long, Lord? . . ." . . .

About Feb. and March it pleased the king importunately to command and urge the judges and London justices to put the laws against Nonconformists in execution, but the nation grew backward to it. In London they have been oft and long commanded to it; and Sir Joseph Sheldon, the Archbishop of Canterbury's near kinsman, being Lord Mayor, on April 30th the execution began. . . .

Being denied forcibly the use of the chapel which I had built, I was forced to let it stand empty and pay thirty pounds *per annum* for the ground-rent myself, and glad to preach (for nothing) near it, at a chapel built by another formerly in Swallow Street, because it was among the same poor people that had no preaching, the parish having

60,000 souls in it more than the church can hold. When I had preached there awhile, the foresaid Justice Parry (one of them that was accused for slitting Sir John Coventry's nose), with one Sabbes, signed a warrant to apprehend me, and on Nov. 9, 1676, six constables, four beadles and many messengers were set at the chapel-doors to execute it. I forbore that day, and after told the Duke of Lauderdale of it, and asked him what it was that occasioned their wrath against me. He desired me to go and speak with the Bishop of London (Compton). I did, and he spake very fairly and with peaceable words. . . But after a while I went to him again and told him it was supposed that Justice Parry was either set on work by him, or at least a word from him would take him off. I desired him therefore to speak to him, or provide that the constables might be removed from my chapel-doors and their warrant called in. . . He did as good as promise me, telling me that he did not doubt to do it, and so I departed, expecting quietness the next Lord's-day. But instead of that the constables' warrant was continued, though some of them begged to be excused, and against their wills they continued guarding the door for above four-and-twenty Lord's-days after. And I came near the bishop no more, when I had so tried what their kindnesses and promises signify. . . .

When Dr. William Lloyd became pastor of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, upon Lamplugh's preferment, I was encouraged by Dr. Tillotson to offer him my chapel in Oxendon Street for public worship, which he accepted, to my great satisfaction, and now there is constant preaching there. Be it by Conformists or Nonconformists, I rejoice that Christ is preached to the people in that parish, whom ten or twenty such chapels cannot hold.

About March 1677 fell out a trifling business, which I will mention, lest the fable pass for truth when I am dead. At a coffee-house in Fuller's Rents, where many Papists and Protestants used to meet together, one Mr. Dyet (son to old Sir Richard Dyet, Chief Justice in the North, and brother to a deceased dear friend of mine, the sometime wife of my old dear friend Colonel Sylvanus Tailor), one that professed himself no Papist, but was their familiar, said openly that I had killed a man with my own hand in cold blood; that it was a tinker at my door;

that because he beat his kettle and disturbed me in my studies I went down and pistoled him. One Mr. Peters occasioned his wrath by oft challenging in vain the Papists to dispute with me or answer my books against them. Mr. Peters told Mr. Dyet that this was so shameless a slander that he should answer it. Mr. Dyet told him that a hundred witnesses would testify that it was true, and I was tried for my life at Worcester for it. To be short, Mr. Peters ceased not till he brought Mr. Dyet to come to my chamber and confess his fault, and ask me forgiveness, and with him came one Mr. Tasbrook, an eminent, sober, prudent Papist. I told him that these usages to such as I, and far worse, were so ordinary, and I had long suffered so much more than words, that it must be no difficulty to me to forgive them to any man, but especially to one whose relations had been my dearest friends; and he was one of the first gentlemen that ever showed so much ingenuity¹ as so to confess and ask forgiveness. He told me he would hereafter confess and unsay it, and vindicate me as openly as he had wronged me. . . .

About October 1678 fell out the murder of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey, which made a very great change in England. One Dr. Titus Oates had discovered a plot of the Papists, of which he wrote out the particulars very largely, telling how they fired the city and contriving to bring the kingdom to Popery, and in order thereto to kill the king. . . . The parliament took the alarm upon it, and Oates was now believed; and indeed all his large confessions, in every part, agreed to admiration. Hereupon the king proclaimed pardon and reward to any that would confess or discover the murder. . . . Thus Oates's testimony, seconded by Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey's murder and Bedlow and Pranse's testimonies, became to be generally believed. Ireland, a Jesuit, and two more were condemned, as designing to kill the king. Hill, Berry and Green were condemned for the murder of Godfrey, and executed. But Pranse was, by a Papist, first terrified into a denial again of the plot to kill the king, and took on him to be distracted, but quickly recanted of this, and had no quiet till he told how he was so affrighted, and renewed all his testimony and confession.

¹ = ingenuousness.

After this came in one Mr. Dugdale, a Papist, and confessed the same plot, and especially the Lord Stafford's interest in it. And after him more and more evidence daily was added.

Coleman, the Duchess of York's secretary (and one of the Papists' great plotters and disputers), being surprised, though he made away all his later papers, was hanged by the old ones that were remaining and by Oates his testimony. But the parliament kept off all aspersions from the duke. The hopes of some, and the fears of others of his succession prevailed with many.

At last the Lord Treasurer (Sir Thomas Osborne made Earl of Danby) came upon the stage, having been before the object of the parliament and people's jealousy and hard thoughts. He being afraid that somewhat would be done against him, knowing that Mr. Montague (his kinsman), late ambassador in France, had some letters of his in his keeping which he thought might endanger him, got an order from the king to seize on all Mr. Montague's letters, who, suspecting some such usage, had conveyed away the chief letters, and telling the parliament where they were they sent and fetched them, and upon the reading of them were so instigated against the Lord Treasurer they impeached him in the Lords' House of high treason.

But not long after the king dissolved the long parliament (which he had kept up about seventeen or eighteen years). But a new parliament is promised.

Above forty Scotsmen (of which three preachers) were by their council sentenced to be not only banished but sold as servants (called slaves) to the American plantations. They were brought by ship to London. Divers citizens offered to pay their ransom. The king was petitioned for them. I went to the Duke of Lauderdale; but none of us could prevail for one man. At last the shipmaster was told that by a statute it was a capital crime to transport any of the king's subjects out of England (where now they were) without their consent, and so he set them on shore and they all escaped for nothing. . .

CHAPTER VII

ANTI-POPERY EXCITEMENT

Murder of Archbishop Sharp—Dangerfield—Funeral sermons—Suppressed passage concerning Mrs. Baxter—Thomas Gouge—Distrains and bonds—The paraphrase of the New Testament—Waiting for the end.

1678-1685

THE long and grievous parliament (that silenced about 2,000 ministers and did many works of such a nature) being dissolved as aforesaid on Jan. 25, 1678, a new one was chosen and met on March 6 following. And the king refusing their chosen speaker (Mr. Segmore), raised in them a greater displeasure against the Lord Treasurer, thinking him the cause; and after some days they chose Serjeant Gregory.

The Duke of York a little before removed out of England, by the king's command; who yet stands to maintain his succession.

The parliament first impeached the foresaid Papist lords for the plot or conspiracy (the Lord Belasyse, Lord Arundel, Lord of Powis, Lord Stafford and Lord Peter), and after them the Lord Treasurer.

New fires breaking out enrage the people against the Papists. A great part of Southwark was before burnt, and the Papists strongly suspected¹ the cause. Near half the buildings of the Temple were burnt. And it was greatly suspected to be done by the Papists. One Mr. Bifield's house in Holborn and divers others so fired (but quenched) as made it very probable to be by their conspiracy. And at last in Fetter Lane it fell on the house of Mr. Robert Bird (a man employed in law, of great judgment and piety), who, having more wit than many others to search it out, found that it was done by a new servant-maid, who confessed it first to him and then to a justice, and after to the Lords, that one Nicholas Stubbes, a Papist, having

¹ = to be the cause.

first made her promise to be a Papist, next promised her five pounds to set fire on her master's house, telling her that many others were to do the like and the Protestant heretics to be killed by the middle of June, and that it was no more sin to do it than to kill a dog. Stubbes was taken and at first vehemently denied, but after confessed all, and told them that one Giffard, a priest and his confessor, engaged him in it, and divers others, and told them all as aforesaid, how the firing and plot went on and what hope they had of a French invasion. The House of Commons desired the king to pardon the woman (Eliz. Oxley) and Stubbes.

If the Papists have not confidence in the French invasion, God leaveth them to utter madness to hasten their ruin. They were in full junctness through the land, and the noise of rage was by their design turned against the Nonconformists. But their hopes did cast them into such an impatience of delay that they could no longer stay, but must presently reign by rage of blood. Had they studied to make themselves odious to the land, they could have found out no more effectual way than by firing, murder and plotting to kill the king. All London at this day is in such fear of them that they are fain to keep up private watches in all streets (besides the common ones) to save their houses from firing. Yea, while they find that it increaseth a hatred of them, and while many of them are already hanged, they still go on; which showeth either their confidence in foreign aid or their utter infatuation. . .

On the 27th of April, 1679, though it was the Lord's-day, the parliament sate, excited by Stubbes his confession that the firing-plot went on and the French were to invade us and the Protestants to be murdered by June 28, and they voted that the Duke of York's declaring himself a Papist was the cause of all our dangers by these plots, and sent to the Lords to concur in the same vote. . . .

The Earl of Argyle told me that, being in company with some very great men, one of them said that he went once to hear Mr. Baxter preach, and he said nothing but what might beseem the king's chapel, and concluded that it was his judgment that I "ought to be beaten with many stripes," because it could not be through ignorance but mere faction that I conformed not. . . .

The firing fury going on still (God leaving the Papists to self-destroying madness), on Friday night, May 9, some Papist prisoners bribing the porter, they set the prison on fire and burnt much of it down, the porter and they escaping together; which put the parliament to appoint the drawing up of a stricter law to prevent more firing. But what can laws do to it?

On the Lord's-day, May 11, 1679, the Commons sate extraordinarily, and agreed in two votes: (1) that the Duke of York was incapable of succeeding in the imperial Crown of England; (2) that they would stand by the king and the Protestant religion with their lives and fortunes, and if the king came to a violent death, which God forbid, would be revenged on the Papists.

The Archbishop of St. Andrews, in Scotland, James Sharp, was murdered this month. The actors (a servant hardly used by him, or a tenant, drew in some confederates) since suffered.

The parliament shortly dissolved while they insisted on the trial of the Lord Treasurer.

The Scots being forbidden to preach and meet in the open fields, being led by a few rash men, at a meeting, being assaulted, defended themselves, and so were many drawn into resistance of the magistrate and were destroyed.

There came from among the Papists more and more converts that detected the plot against religion and the king. After Oates, Bedlow, Everard, Dugdale, Pranse, came Jenrison, a gentleman of Gray's Inn, Smyth, a priest, and others. But nothing stopped them more than a plot discovered to have turned all the odium on the Presbyterians and Protestant adversaries of Popery. They hired one Dangerfield to manage the matter; but by the industry of Colonel Mansel (who was to have been first accused) and Sir William Waller, the plot was fully detected (to have forged a plot as of the Presbyterians, or Dissenters, and many great lords). And Dangerfield confessed all, and continueth a steadfast convert and Protestant to this day.

But my unfitness, and the torrent of late matter here, stops me from proceeding to insert the history of this age. It is done, and like to be done, so copiously by others that these shreds will be of small signification. Every year of late hath afforded matter for a volume of lamentations.

Only that posterity may not be deluded by credulity, I shall truly tell them that lying most impudently in print, against the most notorious evidence of truth, in the vending of cruel malice against men of conscience and the fear of God, is become so ordinary a trade, as that it's like, with men of experience, ere long to pass for a good conclusion. *Dictum vel scriptum est (a malignis) ergo falsum est.* Many of the malignant clergy and laity, especially Le Strange, the observator, and such others, do with great confidence publish the most notorious falsehoods, that I must confess it hath greatly depressed my esteem of most history and of human nature. If other historians be like some of these times, their assertions, whenever they speak of such as they distaste, are to be read as Hebrew, backward; and are so far from signifying truth that many for one are down-right lies. It's no wonder perjury is grown so common when the most impudent lying hath so prepared the way. . . .

Dr. Stillingfleet, being made Dean of Paul's, was put on as the most plausible writer to begin the assault against us, which he did in a printed sermon proving me and such others schismatics and separatists. To which I gave an answer which I thought satisfactory (Dr. Owen and Mr. Alsop also answered him). To all which he wrote somewhat like a reply.

Against this I wrote a second defence, which he never answered. . . .

In a short time I was called with a grieved heart to preach and publish many funeral sermons, on the death of many excellent saints.

Mr. Stubbes went first, that humble, holy, serious preacher, long a blessing to Gloucestershire and Somersetshire, and other parts, and lastly to London. I had great reason to lament my particular loss, of so holy a friend, who oft told me that for very many years he never went to God by solemn prayer without a particular remembrance of me. .

Next died Mrs. Coxe, wife to Dr. Thomas Coxe (now President of the College of Physicians), a woman of such admirable composure, of humble, serious godliness, meekness, patience, exactness of speech and all behaviour and great charity, that all that I have said in her funeral sermon is much short of her worth.

Next died my most entire friend Alderman Henry Ashurst, commonly taken for the most exemplary saint that was of public notice in this city; so sound in judgment, of such admirable meekness, patience, universal charity, studious of good works, and large therein, that we know not where to find his equal. Yet though such a holy man, of a strong body, God tried his patience by the terrible disease of the stone. . .

Next my dear friend Mr. John Corbet, of just the like temper of body and soul, having endured at Chichester many years' torment of the same disease. . . He having lived in my house before, and greatly honoured by my wife, she got not long after his excellent, exemplary wife (daughter to Dr. Twisse) to be her companion, but enjoyed that comfort but a little while which I have longer enjoyed.

Near the same time died my father's second wife, Mary, the daughter of Sir Thomas Hunks and sister to Sir Fulke Hunks, the king's Governor of Shrewsbury in the wars. Her mother, the old Lady Hunks, died at my father's house between eighty and one hundred years old. And my mother-in-law died at ninety-six (of a cancer) in perfect understanding, having lived from her youth in the greatest mortification, austerity to her body, and constancy of prayer and all devotion of any one that ever I knew; in the hatred of all sin, strictness of universal obedience, and for thirty years longing to be with Christ; in constant daily acquired infirmity of body (got by avoiding all exercise and long secret prayer in the coldest seasons, and such like), but of a constitution naturally strong: afraid of recovering whenever she was ill. For some days before her death she was so taken with the Ninety-first Psalm that she would get those that came near her to read it to her over and over; which psalm also was a great means of comfort to old Beza, even against his death.

Soon after died Jane Matthews, aged seventy-six, my housekeeper fourteen years; though mean of quality, very eminent, in Kidderminster and the parts about, for wisdom, piety, and a holy, sober, righteous, exemplary life. . . .

And many of my old hearers and flock at Kidderminster died not long before. Among whom a mean freeholder, James Butcher, of Wannerton, hath left few equal to him for all that seemeth to approach perfection in a plain

man. O how many holy souls are gone to Christ out of that one parish of Kidderminster in a few years, and yet the number seemeth to increase. . . .

[In 1681, God called my sin to remembrance by his heavy hand on my dear wife, a woman of extraordinary acuteness of wit, solidity of judgment, incredible prudence and sagacity and sincere devotedness to God, and unusual strict obedience to him; and who had heaped on me so many and great obligations to love and tenderness as made my wound more deep and painful. She had a hot sharp blood and hot brain, and a woman persuading her to too long a use of ginger for the colic had cast her into a distraction three years before; and I had begged and obtained her speedy recovery of God and promised a better usage and improvement of so great a mercy, but broke my vows and made no better use of it than before. And on June 3, with the overmuch use of the tincture of amber by another woman's counsel, and after long (vain) fears of a cancer . . she fell again into the same case (some dissatisfaction in her kindred furthering it, being of an over-tender and sensible temper); and suddenly weakened by blood-letting, died June 14, and was buried in her mother's grave in Christ Church, June 17. In depth of grief I truly wrote her life (which Mr. Clark hath since contracted) and published it with her mother's old funeral sermon which (foreseeing her death) she had requested me to reprint December 30 before. In the same passion I published some *Poetical Fragments* written partly in gratitude for myself formerly, and partly in grief for her in former sickness and affliction, and for some others; and though (being now too dull for poetry) they take not with those that expect more art, they profit two sorts, women and vulgar Christians and persons in passion by affliction; and some in devotional exercise of affection. . .]

About this time died my dear friend Mr. Thomas Gouge, of whose life you may see a little in Mr. Clark's last book of *Lives*, a wonder of sincere industry in works of charity. It would make a volume to recite at large the charity he used to his poor parishioners at Sepulchre's (before he was ejected and silenced for Nonconformity). His conjunction with Alderman Ashurst and some such others, in a weekly meeting, to take account of the honest poor families in

the city that were in great want, he being the treasurer and visitor; his voluntary catechising the Christ's Church boys when he might not preach; the many thousand Bibles printed in Welsh that he dispersed in Wales; the *Practice of Piety*, *The Whole Duty of Man*, *my Call*, and many thousands of his own writing, given freely all over Wales; his setting up about three hundred or four hundred schools in Wales to teach children only to read, and the Catechism; his industry to beg money for all this, besides most of his own estate laid out on it; his travels over Wales once or twice a year to visit his schools and see to the execution;—this was true episcopacy of a silenced minister (who yet went constantly to the parish-churches, and was authorised by an old university licence to preach occasionally, and yet for so doing was excommunicate, even in Wales while he was doing all this good). He served God thus to a healthful age (seventy-four or seventy-six). I never saw him sad, but always cheerful. About a fortnight before he died he told me that sometime in the night some small trouble came to his heart, he knew not what. And without sickness, or pain, or fear of death, they heard him in his sleep give a groan, and he was dead. O how holy and blessed a life, and how easy a death! . . .

Having been for retirement in the country from July till August 14, 1682, returning in great weakness, I was able only to preach twice, of which the last was in my usual lecture in New Street, and it fell out to be August 24, just that day twenty year that I (and near two thousand more) had been by law forbidden to preach any more. I was sensible of God's wonderful mercy that had kept so many of us twenty years in so much liberty and peace while so many severe laws were in force against us, and so great a number were round about us who wanted neither malice nor power to afflict us. And so I took that day my leave of the pulpit and public work, in a thankful congregation. And it is like indeed to be my last.

But after this, when I had ceased preaching, I was (being newly risen from extremity of pain) suddenly surprised in my house by a poor violent informer and many constables and officers, who rushed in and apprehended me and served on me one warrant to seize on my person for coming within five miles of a corporation, and five more

warrants to distrain for a hundred and ninety pounds, for five sermons. They cast my servants into fears, and were about to take all my books and goods, and I contentedly went with them towards the justice to be sent to jail, and left my house to their will. But Dr. Thomas Coxe, meeting me, forced me in again to my couch and bed, and went to five justices and took his oath (without my knowledge) that I could not go to prison without danger of death. Upon that the justices delayed a day till they could speak with the king, and told him what the doctor had sworn; and the king consented that, at the present, imprisonment should be forborne, that I might die at home. But they executed all their warrants on my books and goods, even the bed that I lay sick on, and sold them all; and some friends paid them as much money as they were priced at, which I repaid, and was fain to send them away. The warrant against my person was signed by Mr. Parry and Mr. Phillips; the five warrants against my goods by Sir James Smith and Sir James Butcher. And I had never the least notice of any accusation, or who were the accusers or witnesses, much less did I receive any summons to appear, or answer for myself, or ever saw the justices or accusers. But the justice that signed the warrants for execution said that the two Hiltons solicited him for them, and one Bucke led the constables that distrained.

But though I sent the justice the written deeds which proved that the goods were none of mine (nor ever were), and sent two witnesses whose hands were to those conveyances, I offered their oaths of it, and also proved that the books I had many years ago alienated to my kinsman, this signified nothing to them, but they seized and sold all nevertheless. And both patience and prudence forbade us to try the title at law, when we knew what charges had been lately made of justices and juries and how others had been used. If they had taken only my cloak they should have had my coat also, and if they had taken me on one cheek I would have turned the other; for I knew the case was such that he that will not put up one blow, one wrong or slander, shall suffer two, yea many more.

But when they had taken and sold all, and I borrowed some bedding and necessaries of the buyer, I was never the quieter, for they threatened to come upon me again,

and take all as mine, whosoever it was, which they found in my possession. So that I had no remedy but utterly to forsake my house and goods and all, and take secret lodgings distant in a stranger's house. But having a long lease of my own house, which binds me to pay a greater rent than now it is worth, whenever I go I must pay that rent.

The separation from my books would have been a greater part of my small affliction, but that I found I was near the end both of that work and life which needeth books; and so I easily let go all. Naked came I into the world, and naked must I go out.

But I never wanted less (what man can give) than when men had taken all. My old friends (and strangers to me) were so liberal that I was fain to restrain their bounty. Their kindness was a surer and larger revenue to me than my own.

But God was pleased quickly to put me past all fear of man and all desire of avoiding suffering from them by concealment; by laying on me more himself than man can do. Their imprisonment, with tolerable health, would have seemed a palace to me. And had they put me to death for such a duty as they persecute me, it would have been a joyful end of my calamity. But day and night I groan and languish under God's just afflicting hand. The pain which before only tired my reins and tore my bowels now also fell upon my bladder, and scarce any part or hour is free. As waves follow waves in the tempestuous seas, so one pain and danger followeth another in this sinful, miserable flesh. I die daily, and yet remain alive. God, in his great mercy, knowing my dullness in health and ease, doth make it much easier to repent and hate my sin and loathe myself, and condemn the world, and submit to the sentence of death with willingness, than otherwise it was ever like to have been. O how little is it that wrathful enemies can do against us, in comparison of what our sin and the justice of God can do! And O how little is it that the best and kindest of friends can do for a pained body, or a guilty sinful soul, in comparison of one gracious look or word from God! Woe be to him that hath no better help than man; and blessed is he whose help and hope is in the Lord! . . .

While I continued night and day under constant pain, and often strong, and under the sentence of approaching death by an uncurable disease which age and great debility yields to, I found great need of the constant exercise of patience by obedient submission to God; and writing a small tractate of it for my own use, I saw reason to yield to them that desired it might be public, there being (especially) so common need of obedient patience. . .

Under my daily pains I was drawn to a work which I had never the least thoughts of (and is like to be the last of my life), to write *A Paraphrase on the New Testament*, Mr. John Humphrey having long importuned me to write a paraphrase on the Epistle to the Romans; when I had done that, the usefulness of it to myself drew me farther and farther till I had done all. But having confessed my ignorance of the Revelation, and yet loth wholly to omit it, I gave but general notes, with the reasons of my uncertainty in the greatest difficulties; which I know will fall under the sharp censure of many. But truth is more valuable than such men's praises. I fitted the whole by plainness to the use of ordinary families.

After many times deliverance from the sentence of death, on November 20, 1684, in the very entrance of the seventieth year of my age, God was pleased so greatly to increase my painful diseases as to pass on me the sentence of a painful death. . . But God turneth it to my good and giveth me a greater willingness to die than I once thought I should ever have attained. The Lord teach me more fully to love his will, and rest therein, as much better than my own that oft striveth against it!

A little before this, while I lay in pain and languishing, the justices of sessions sent warrants to apprehend me (about a thousand more being in catalogue to be all bound to the good behaviour). I thought they would send me six months to prison for not taking the Oxford Oath and dwelling in London, and so I refused to open my chamber-door to them, their warrant not being to break it open. But they set six officers at my study-door, who watched all night, and kept me from my bed and food, so that the next day I yielded to them, who carried me (scarce able to stand) to their sessions, and bound me, in four hundred pound bond, to the good behaviour. I desired to know

what my crime was, and who my accusers, but they told me it was for no fault, but to secure the government in evil times; and that they had a list of many suspected persons that must do the like as well as I. I desired to know for what I was numbered with the suspect, and by whose accusation, but they gave me good words and would not tell me. . . .

December 11th, I was forced in all my pain and weakness to be carried to the sessions-house, or else my bond of four hundred pounds would have been judged forfeit. And the more moderate justices that promised my discharge would none of them be there, but left the work to Sir William Smith and the rest, who openly declared that they had nothing against me and took me for innocent, but yet I must continue bound, lest others should expect to be discharged also, which I openly refused. But my sureties would be¹ bound, lest I should die in jail, against my declared will, and so I must continue. Yet they discharged others as soon as I was gone. I was told that they did all by instructions from, etc.—and that the main end was to restrain me from writing; which now should I do with greatest caution, they will pick out something which a jury may take for a breach of my bonds. . . .

January 17th, I was forced again to be carried to the sessions, and, after divers days good words which put me in expectation of freedom, when I was gone, one justice, Sir — Deerham, said that it's like that these persons solicited so for my liberty that they might come to hear me in conventicles; and on that they bound me again in four hundred pound bond, for above a quarter of a year (and so it's like it will be till I die, or worse), though no one ever accused me for any conventicle or preaching since they took all my books and goods above two years ago, and I for the most part keep my bed. . . .

¹ = insisted on being.

APPENDICES





THE KIDDERMINSTER STATUE (*Brock*) IN SICILIAN MARBLE

APPENDIX I

LAST TRIAL AND DEATH

THE *Autobiography* breaks off abruptly in January 1685. On the 2nd of February Charles II. had an apoplectic seizure. As soon as it was realised that he was mortally struck, the Duke of York asked him whether he wished to make his peace with the Church of Rome. The vizor of deception makes breathing difficult to the dying; he removed it and answered, "With all my heart." Archbishop Sancroft, who had spoken plainly to the king, the bishops and the splendour of the Court were dismissed from the death-chamber. A Roman priest was admitted, who gave Charles absolution and the last sacraments. Thus, fortified by the rites of the Church, the merry monarch died on the 6th of February.

On the accession of James II. a period of redoubled and undisguised persecution began. The attempt to strike consternation and terror into the Nonconformists was signalled by bringing their saintliest and most learned representative to trial. He was now an old decrepit man, much older than his years. He was enfeebled by protracted ill-health and racked by frightful physical agonies. He prayed daily for the acquittal of death, for to him to die was gain. But it was not for him to choose when and how. He had to drink yet deeper of the Master's cup of sorrow. On the 28th of February he was arrested and sent to prison under the warrant of the infamous Judge Jeffreys for publishing a scandalous and seditious book entitled a *Paraphrase of the New Testament*.¹ The charge ultimately formulated was that Baxter, under pretence of interpreting certain passages² in the New Testament, was covertly attacking the bishops and rulers of his own day. A series of clever innuendos was inserted into the indictment reading preposterous yet not entirely unpalatable meanings into his exposition. Baxter, in his published "General Defence of my accused writings called seditious and schismatical"³ shows how by such a method he would be condemnable if he said the Lord's Prayer or used the Book of Common Prayer, for he would, of course, be referring to the rulers of his time

¹ 1685. See *ante*, p. 253.

² These appear at the end of the *Paraphrase*, 2nd edition; also in Orme's *Life of Baxter*, pp. 359-62.

³ *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ* (1696), Appendix VIII., p. 124.

when he prayed "Deliver us from evil," or "Forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers" and "turn their hearts."

He succeeded in obtaining a temporary release under a writ of *habeas corpus*, and retired for a while into the country in a weak and emaciated condition. On the 6th of May he presented himself in Westminster Hall, and information was then formally drawn up against him. On the 14th of May he returned his plea of *Not Guilty*. On the 18th his counsel moved for further time. Jeffreys, in a rage, cried out, "I will not give him a minute's time more to save his life. We have had to do with other sorts of persons, but now we have a saint to deal with; and I know how to deal with saints as well as sinners. Yonder stands Oates in the pillory"—he was at that moment in the stocks in New Palace Yard—"and he says he suffers for the truth, and so says Baxter; but if Baxter did but stand on the other side of the pillory with him, I would say two of the greatest rogues and rascals in the kingdom stood there."

Jeffreys' ill-repute has obscured for many the truth that he was a person of unusual parts. He was a lawyer of consummate ability and great learning. His rise to eminence had been achieved with extraordinary rapidity and by hard though unscrupulous work. He was a powerful advocate, and had attained to the highest offices in his profession when he died at the early age of forty. But with all his legal gifts he was a bad judge. A man of shameless brutality, a drunkard who would flame suddenly into beastlike fury, he carried coarse vengeance to the last degradation of jeering with gloating mockery at the men whom he condemned to merciless punishment.

On the 30th of May the trial began in the afternoon at the Guildhall. Baxter came into the court with quiet composure and serene dignity. He was now a stooping and almost spectral figure, being "nothing," as an eye-witness reports, "but skin and bones."

A few moments afterwards Jeffreys entered with a face ablaze with anger and brandy. Some of the most eminent counsel of the day had been retained for Baxter through the kindness of his ever-loyal and generous friend Sir Henry Ashurst. These were Pollexfen, Wallop, Williams, Rotherham, Atwood and Phipps. Jeffreys, who knew well that a fair trial would defeat his own ends, had resolved upon a line of conduct which would make counsel and witnesses alike irrelevant.

The following account is by an unknown I. C., who wrote it in a letter once among the MSS. in Dr. Williams's Library. A rough copy had been sent to Sylvester on 2 June, 1694, from Kingston at his own request, but he appears to have made no use of it.¹

¹ It is printed at length in the *Christian Reformer*, January 1825.

Sir, you may be satisfied in the truth of this account, I being an eye-witness of the whole, and had placed myself as near the poor prisoner as I could, because I was pretty sure I should hear the full[?foul]-mouthed judge. Sir Henry Ashurst held Mr. Baxter up by the right arm, and I put my hands and helped him on the other side; Mr. Baxter said to me, "Thank you, sir." Indeed, I thought it the honourablest office that ever Sir Henry Ashurst and poor I were employed in in our lives.

Baxter seems, on his own initiative, to have objected to the competency of the jury on the ground that the charges would turn on the exposition of the Greek text. This objection was at once overruled, whereupon Pollexfen sought to conciliate the jury with a tactful compliment.

But now my lord broke in upon Pollexfen like a fiend, and tells him he should not sit there to hear him preach neither.

The racy narrative proceeds:

Pollexfen. No, my lord, I am of counsel for Mr. Baxter and shall offer nothing but what is *ad rem*.

Lord Chief Justice. Why this is not; that you cant to the jury beforehand.

Pol. I beg your lordship's pardon then. I will go to the business.

Lord C. J. Come, what do you say to that text there? Read it, clerk.

Clerk. Who devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers, these, etc. [Then the Paraphrase too was read.]

Lord C. J. Oy! Is not this now an old knave to interpret this to be long liturgies?

Pol. So do others of the Church of England, too, my lord, and we are loath to wrong the cause of liturgies as to make them such a novel invention as not to be able to date them as early as the Scribes and Pharisees, etc.

Lord C. J. No, no, Mr. Pollexfen, they were long-winded extemporary prayers, such as they use to say when they appropriate God to themselves, "Lord, we are thy people, thy peculiar people, thy dear people," etc. And then he snorts and speaks through the nose, and clenches his hands and lifts up his goggle eyes in a mimical way, running on furiously, as he saith they used to pray. But old Pollexfen gave him a bite now and then, though he could hardly crowd in a word.

Pol. Why, some will tell you, my lord, it is hard measure to stop these men's mouths and yet not suffer them to speak through the nose.

Lord C. J. Pollexfen, I know you well enough, and I'll set a mark upon you, for you are the patron for the faction. This is an old rogue, and hath poisoned the world with his Kidderminster doctrine. Do not we know how he preached formerly, "Curse ye, Meroz, curse them bitterly that come not to help the Lord against the mighty," and encouraged all the women and maids to bring in their bodkins and thimbles to carry on the war against that king of ever-blessed memory; an old schismatical knave, a hypocritical villain!

Pol. I beseech your lordship, suffer me a word for my client. It is well known to all intelligible men of age in this nation, that these things agree not at all to the character of Mr. Baxter, who wished as well to the king and royal family, as Mr. Love that lost his head for endeavouring to bring in the son long before he was restored; and, my lord, Mr. Baxter's loyal and peaceable spirit King Charles II. would have rewarded with a bishopric, when he came in, if he could have conformed.

Lord C. J. Oy! Oy! we know that: but what ailed the old stock-owl,¹ unthankful villain that he could not conform—was he better or wiser than other men? He hath been ever since the spring of the faction; I am sure he hath poisoned the world with his linsey-wolsey doctrine.

And here I thought he would have run stark staring mad . . . and yet his larum was not run down yet neither; for "he was a conceited, stubborn, fanatical dog, that did not conform when he might have been preferred; hang him! This one old fellow hath cast more reproach upon the constitution and excellent discipline of our Church than will be wiped out this hundred years; but I will handle him for it, for, by God! he deserves to be whipped through the city."

Pol. My lord, I am sure these things are not *ad rem*. . . . I come not to justify men's Nonconformity, nor to give here the reasons of their scruples why they cannot accept of beneficial places, but had rather suffer anything. My lord, I know not what reasons sway other men's consciences; my business is to plead for my client, and to answer the charge of dangerous sedition that is alleged to be in this Paraphrase of his upon the New Testament.

Then my lord took breath a little, and turning his eyes all around, I suppose to see how the multitude liked this harangue, spies Dr. Bates laughing, and pierces him through like a vulture; but Dr. Bates not caring, I suppose, to be stared upon by him, steps down, and Jeffreys took notice of it, and said, "There is Bates, I saw him just now—I will say that for him, he is a gentleman and a scholar, and the best of the whole pack of them; he hath always taken care to keep his pitcher whole and his water clear: but this old rogue hath been always a troublesome factious fellow." So I saw Dr. Bates afterwards in the court, and told him of it; and he smiled and shook his head, and answered as one said, "What evil have I done, etc., that this wicked man praiseth me?"

Pol. My lord, my client, Mr. Baxter, is a man of another spirit; he hath written a book for episcopal government, etc., and that is his judgment, my lord; I have it in court and will show it your lordship, if you please.

Lord C. J. I will see none of his books; it is for primitive Episcopacy, I will warrant you—a bishop in every parish. Pox take 'em, we know their bishops well enough.

? stockowl = the great eagle-owl.

Pol. Nay, my lord, it is the same with Archbishop Usher's. [But a silly jerk he had at him too, though he mumbled it so softly I could not well hear it.] My lord, Mr. Baxter was a commissioner, appointed by the king at the Savoy, to settle ecclesiastical affairs, and he never offered anything for agreement and accommodation but Archbishop Usher's Reduction of Episcopacy and nothing at all against liturgies, as such.

Lord C. J. It is no matter what he or Bishop Usher offers; our Church is established, and we will bate nothing; neither do we care what such a company of whining hypocritical fellows talk of, and this is one of the ring-leaders of them; but I will handle him well enough, I'll warrant you.

Now Dr. Oates being whipped a little before, and my lord and the government being in a whipping mood, for Dangerfield was condemned this very morning, at Westminster Hall, by my lord (whose trial I heard, too), the people, especially the ladies, of whom there were some of good quality, burst out a-weeping, and amongst the rest a Conformist in his gown and scarf, one Dr. Ford, a comely, grave man, who stood near my lord upon his left hand, who seemed not at all to like these things. But Jeffreys, turning his wall-eyes hither and thither, and seeing all the persons upon the bench almost (except himself) in tears, he calls out to Mr. Baxter, saying to this effect:

Lord C. J. Come you, what do you say for yourself, you old knave! Come, speak up: what doth he say? I am not afraid of you for all the snivelling calves that are got about you.

Mr. Baxter. Your lordship need not, for I will not hurt you. But these things will surely be understood one day, what tools¹ one sort of Protestants are made to persecute and vex the other. [And lifting up his eyes to heaven, said:] I am not concerned to answer such stuff, but am ready to produce my writings for the confutation of all this, and my life and conversation is known to many in this nation, etc.

The foregoing account is supplemented by Calamy; and Orme weaves his authorities into his own connected narrative.

Mr. Wallop argued that Baxter's *Paraphrase* contained eternal truths, and that there was no colour for the innuendos drawn up in the indictment.

Jeffreys said, "Mr. Wallop, I observe you are in all these dirty causes: and were it not for you gentlemen of the long robe, who should have more wit and honesty than to support and hold up the factious knaves by the chin, we should not be at the pass we are . . . if you do not understand your duty better I shall teach it you." Upon which Mr. Wallop sat down.

Mr. Rotherham urged "that if Mr. Baxter's book had sharp reflections upon the Church of Rome by name, but spake well of the prelates of the Church of England, it was to be presumed

¹ Orme transcribes *fools*.

that the sharp reflections were intended only against the prelates of the Church of Rome." Jeffreys replied, "Baxter was an enemy to the name and thing: the office and persons of bishops." Rotherham added, "Baxter frequently attended divine service, went to the Sacrament, and persuaded others to do so, too . . . and had, in the very book so charged, spoken very modestly and honourably of the bishops of the Church of England." Baxter interposed and said, "My lord, I have been so moderate with respect to the Church of England, that I have incurred the censure of many Dissenters upon that account." "Baxter for bishops!" exclaimed Jeffreys, "a merry conceit indeed: turn to it, turn to it." Rotherham turned to a place where it is said "that great respect is due to those truly called to be bishops among us." "Aye," said Jeffreys, "this is your presbyterian cant; truly called to be bishops; that is himself, and such rascals, called to be bishops of Kidderminster, and other such places. Bishops set apart by such factious, snivelling Presbyterians as himself; a Kidderminster bishop, he means. According to the saying of a late learned author, 'And every parish shall maintain a tithe-pig metropolitan.'"

Baxter was again about to speak, but Jeffreys checked him, "Richard, Richard, dost thou think we'll hear thee poison the court? Richard, thou art an old fellow, an old knave; thou hast written books enough to load a cart, every one as full of sedition, I might say treason, as an egg is full of meat. Hadst thou been whipped out of thy writing-trade forty years ago, it had been happy. Thou pretendest to be a preacher of the Gospel of Peace, and thou hast one foot in the grave: it is time for thee to begin to think what account thou intendest to give. But leave thee to thyself, and I see thou'lt go on as thou hast begun; but, by the grace of God, I'll look after thee."

When Mr. Rotherham had sat down Mr. Atwood tried to get a hearing, and beginning to read from the text of Mr. Baxter's book, Jeffreys broke forth again, "You shan't draw me into a conventicle with your annotations nor your snivelling parson, neither." "My lord," pleaded Atwood, "that I may use the best authority, permit me to repeat your lordship's own words." "No, you shan't, you need not speak, for you are an author already; though you speak and write impertinently." Atwood replied, "I can't help that, my lord, if my talent be no better, but it is my duty to do my best for my client."

Jeffreys ordered him several times to sit down, but Atwood persisted. "Well," said Jeffreys at last, "you have had your say." Williams and Phipps saw it was useless to attempt to speak, and were silent. Jeffreys summed up in a long harangue. It was notoriously known, he said, there had been a design to ruin the king and the nation. The old game had been

renewed: and this person had been the main incendiary. "He is as modest now as can be, but time was when no man was so ready at 'Bind your king in chains, and your nobles in fetters of iron'; and 'To your tents, O Israel.' Gentlemen, for God's sake, don't let us be gulled twice in an age." When he had finished Baxter said to him, "Does your lordship think any jury will pretend to pass a verdict upon me upon such a trial?" "I'll warrant you, Mr. Baxter," said he; "don't you trouble yourself about that."

Jeffreys knew his packed jury. They did not even retire, but, after a brief consultation at the Bar, brought in a verdict of *Guilty*. As he was leaving, Baxter told Jeffreys that a predecessor of his (meaning Lord Chief Justice Sir Matthew Hale) had had other thoughts of him. To which Jeffreys replied that "there was not an honest man in England but what took him for a great knave." Baxter had several clergymen ready to be called as witnesses, but they were useless in the face of a calculated violence of justice. The trial over, Sir Henry Ashurst led Baxter through the crowd and drove him away in his coach.

For a month, before being brought up for sentence, Baxter used his influence to procure a milder sentence than he was likely to get from Jeffreys. He addressed the Bishop of London in a noble letter:

Being by episcopal ordination vowed to the sacred ministry and bound not to desert it, when by painful diseases and debility I waited for my change, I durst not spend my last days in idleness, and knew not how better to serve the Church than by writing a Paraphrase of the New Testament. . . . My conscience commandeth me to value the Church's strength and honour before my life. . . . I have lived in its communion, and conformed to as much as the Act of Uniformity obliged one in my condition; I have drawn multitudes into the Church, and written to justify the Church and ministry against separation. . . . I owe satisfaction to you that are my diocesan and therefore presume to send you a copy of the information against me, and my answer to the particular accusations; humbly entreating you to spare so much time from your weighty business as to peruse them, or to refer them to be perused for your satisfaction. . . . If your lordship be satisfied that I am no enemy to the Church, and that my punishment will not be for its interest, I hope you will vouchsafe to present my petition to his majesty, that my appeal to the Church may suspend the sentence till my diocesan, or whom his majesty shall appoint, may hear me, and report their sense of the cause. By which your lordship will, I doubt not, many ways serve the welfare of the Church, as well as

oblige your languishing

Humble servant.

Whether any influence was actually brought to bear in mitigation of his sentence does not appear, but on 29 June he

was fined 500 marks, condemned to imprisonment till he paid it, and bound over to good behaviour for seven years. It is said that Jeffreys urged that he should be whipped through the city, but to this his brethren on the Bench would not agree.

From June 1685 to November 1686 Baxter remained a prisoner, and would have remained in prison until his death "had not the king taken off my fine." Prison to Baxter was a time of quietness, and he was allowed considerable comfort. He was visited by his friends, and, among them, by Matthew Henry, who wrote on 17 November, 1685:

He is in as good health as one can expect; and, methinks, looks better, and speaks heartier, than when I saw him last. . . . He gave us some good counsel to prepare for trials; and said the best preparation for them was a life of faith, and a constant course of self-denial. He thought it harder constantly to deny temptations to sensual lusts and pleasures than to resist one single temptation to deny Christ for fear of suffering. . . . He said we who are young are apt to count upon great things, but we must not look for them . . . he thought dying by sickness usually much more painful and dreadful than dying a violent death; especially considering the extraordinary supports which those have who suffer for righteousness' sake.

When it was clear that the fine would not be paid and that Baxter would not petition for release, Lord Powis intervened with a private offer, intimating that the king would grant it as a favour.¹

Baxter was released on 24 November, 1686, but not from his bond of good behaviour. On 28 February, 1687, he took up his residence in Charterhouse Yard, and assisted, so far as health permitted him, the ministry of Matthew Sylvester.

On 10 December, 1688, James II., seeing that he had exasperated the country and that his cause was lost, sent his wife and son to France. On the 11th he made to follow them, and dropped the Great Seal into the Thames, hoping thereby to work further confusion in the nation. Riots broke out in London. Roman Catholic chapels were destroyed and looted. On the 12th, James was stopped by some fishermen near Sheerness and brought back to London. William of Orange preferred to see James abdicate by flight to becoming another royal martyr of ever-blessed memory. On 18 December,

¹ In Baxter MSS. (Letters), vol. vi. is an interesting and important letter, dated 17 November, 1686, "To Mr. Berisford," asking him to "acquaint the E. of Powis (after thanks for his great favours)" of Baxter's financial position and state of health. He says, "I will hazard my life in coming to a Judge's Chamber," and "lest I should seeme to undervalue his Majestyes and his Lordships favours I will submit to 200*l.* bond." Though in this letter Baxter thought "the dispatch of all will be no speedy business," he was free seven days later.

James left London and William reached Whitehall. On 23 December, James, aided by the eager connivance of William, embarked for France, and on 13 February, 1689, William and Mary were the joint sovereigns of England, and Protestantism was re-entrenched as the national religion.

Baxter must have rejoiced in this rapid turn of affairs;¹ but with whatever joy he may have felt there was mingled some regret. Yet, with all its shortcomings, the constitutional settlement must have appeared to him very much the lesser of two evils. He supported the new régime, and in his will, dated 27 July, 1689, he makes sundry legacies out "of the £100 I have lately lent to his Majesty King William."² He approved such a limited subscription as was required by the Toleration Act to bring Nonconformists within the grudging protection of the law. He wrote *Mr. Baxter's Sense of the Articles* to remove the scruples of his brethren. But it must have seemed a sorrowful ending of all his labours to recognise that once again the Church had missed its opportunity and failed to enlarge its sympathies sufficiently to comprehend the well-disposed "conformable" Nonconformists, with the fatal result, foreseen by Baxter, that the religious life of the nation had still to remain a seed-plot of ecclesiastical dissension and disorder for generations to come.

He himself could do little more. His own long "militia" was over. He had fought his last fight; he had kept the faith; he had striven, as he put it on the title-page of one of his books, "for a (hopeless) peace."

He preached when he could for Sylvester on Sunday mornings and every alternate Thursday morning. He wrote diligently and published another score of books, still believing that so he was "promoting peace when the pacifying day shall come."

The rest of the story is soon told:

When after he had continued about four years and a half with me, he was then disabled from going forth any more to his ministerial work; so that what he did he performed it all the residue of his life, *in his own hired house*, where he opened his doors morning and evening, every day, to all that would come to join in family worship with him. . . . But alas³ his growing distempers and infirmities took him also off from this, confining him first to his *chamber* and after to his *bed*. There, through *pain* (for he had a very great stone in his kidney) and sickness, his body wasted; but his soul abode rational, strong in faith and hope. . . . On Tuesday morning, about four of the clock, Decemb. 8, 1691, he expired.

¹ Baxter wrote an unpublished tractate dated Oct. 1, 1691, entitled *King James his abdication of the Crown plainly proved*. Baxter MSS. vol. vii. (Treatises), No. 60.

² *Trans. Shrop. Arch. Soc.*, 4th series, vol. ix. Part I. (1923), p. 145.

³ Orme prints *at last*.

Baxter, who had been born on the Lord's-day, expected and desired his dissolution to have been on the Lord's-day before, which with joy to me he called an *High Day*, because of his desired change expected then by him. . . . Lifting up his eyes to heaven, he uttered these words: Lord, pity, pity, pity the ignorance of this poor city.¹

When in extreme pain, as he prayed to God for release, he checked himself: "It is not fit for me to prescribe—when thou wilt, what thou wilt, how thou wilt"; and to his friends he said, "Do not think the worse of religion for what you see me suffer."

The joy of his last hours was the mystic's joy. The sense of the wonder and beauty of God, the consideration of the Son of God in our nature, the splendour of the great cloud of witnesses, the blessedness of the saints "did much sweeten and familiarise heaven to him." His heart, which had ever been with the Church of his dreams, turned to it again as alone the sphere where true joys are to be found. His greatest comfort was to dwell in rapt imagination on the description in Hebrews xii., which he said "deserved a thousand thousand thoughts":

He was going to the innumerable company of angels, and to the general Assembly and Church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. O how comfortable is that promise: Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things God hath laid up for those who love him.²

The day before he died Dr. Bates and Mr. Mather visited him. "I have pain," he said, "there is no arguing against sense, but I have peace, I have peace." When asked how he did, his reply was "Almost well."

His body was laid to rest in Christ Church, where his wife (and her mother) had already been buried. His funeral³ "was attended by a most numerous company of all ranks and qualities, and especially of ministers, some of whom were Conformists, who thought fit to pay him that last office of respect."

"If life lay on it, wouldst thou turn again,
For the winds blowing or a little rain?"

¹ Sylvester's *Funeral Sermon*, p. 16.

² Bates, *Funeral Sermon*, p. 127.

³ Calamy's *Abridgment* (1702), p. 683.



From a doubtful portrait painted on panel and sold to Mr. William Adam as a portrait of Richard Baxter. Now in Vestry of the Old Meeting Congregational Church ("Baxter Church"), Kidderminster. (Photographed by R. E. Grove)

APPENDIX II

RICHARD BAXTER'S LOVE-STORY AND MARRIAGE

ROMANCE came into Baxter's life when he was forty-seven years old. It is a tale with just enough mystery untold and enough intimacy revealed to make it a fit theme for poets and dramatists.

A radiant girl in her teens held by the gaities of the world, but, for all her frivolity, an unhappy and divided soul, falls in love with the most unworldly of puritan divines in his most ascetically consecrated period, and after intense mental anguish and physical suffering wins him.

It has the lyrical charm of the love-story of Abélard and Héloïse without a touch of the fateful recklessness of that passionate alliance. Baxter's romance is, from beginning to end, honourable and sapphire-pure.

Margaret Charlton was the daughter of Francis and Mary Charlton of Apley Castle, near Wellington, Shropshire. She was of aristocratic blood, and at first did not take kindly to the Puritanism of her devout mother. The Charltons were of noble and ancient lineage reaching through one strain to Hawise, the sister and heiress of Griffith ap Owen, a Welsh chieftain who owned much landed property including the district of Powis. John de Charlton, with the consent of Edward II., married Hawise and, becoming in her right possessed of her property, was made the first Lord Powis.¹

Margaret, Baxter's destined wife, was living in Apley Castle when, with disastrous results, it was garrisoned as a Royalist stronghold, and therefore liable to attack from the king's enemies. Her uncle Robert was resolved, on the death of his brother Francis, Margaret's father, to have the care of the children, especially of the eldest (and only) son and heir. When the widowed Mrs. Charlton, Margaret's mother, largely from motives of protecting herself and family, married Mr. Hanmer, a staunch Royalist, the castle was, in 1644, with Robert's connivance, assaulted by the parliamentary forces and partially burnt down. That scene of horror was witnessed

¹ Bank's *Dormant and Extinct Baronage*, vol. ii.; Camden's *Britannia* (Gough's edition), vol. iii.

by the impressionable child, and she never completely recovered from the shock. "It was stormed while she was in it, and part of the housing about it burnt, and men lay killed before her face, and all of them threatened and stripped of their clothing, so that they were fain to borrow clothes."¹

Robert's possession of the children was brief, for their mother "by great wisdom and diligence surprised them: and secretly conveyed them to one Mr. Bernards, in Essex, and secured them against all his endeavours."²

Mrs. Hanmer, Margaret's mother, against Baxter's advice, removed to Kidderminster about 1658, and her daughter Margaret, then seventeen or eighteen years of age, who had been living at Oxford with her elder and only sister, the wife of Ambrose Upton, a canon of Christ Church, joined her mother. After the death of his wife in 1681, ten years before his own, Baxter wrote "under the power of melting grief" his incomparable little book, *A Breviate of the Life of Mrs. Margaret Baxter*. To our incalculable loss in exact information, but possibly to our gain in imaginative understanding, Baxter was persuaded by his friends to omit from the MS. some of its most intimate and tender passages, "the occasion and inducements of his marriage." He describes Margaret's girlhood with a clearness that calls up the vision of a frail and flower-like figure.

In her vain youth, pride and romances, and company suitable thereto, did take her up. . . . Coming to Kidderminster for mere love to her mother, she had great aversion to the poverty and strictness of the people there, glittering herself in costly apparel and delighting in her romances.³

A modern psychologist cannot fail to see in her gaiety an attempt to flee from reality, to suppress the memory of the storming of Apley Castle and to silence an awakening conscience. Her linnet wings did not flutter long. She had already been moved by a sermon of Mr. H. Hickman's at Oxford, and now Baxter's doctrine of conversion "was received on her heart as the seal on the wax." Baxter, as a preacher, was then at his most fervent stage, but we may hazard more than a suspicion that the wax was being softened by an ardour of admiration in which an all too human element predisposed her to accept his teaching despite its grim and searching character. Her secret confessions, in papers not disclosed by her, even to Baxter himself, during her life, show how dependent she had become on his private and public spiritual direction, and how resolutely unyielding he was in the demands he made upon her for her absolute self-surrender to Christ. These documents do more: they give us also her personal examina-

¹ Baxter's *Breviate of the Life of Mrs. Margaret Baxter* (1681), p. 44.

² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

tion of her own soul, self-questioned with a ruthless realism which not the lancet-keen intellect of Baxter himself could have made more subtle and probing. There are morbid, or, as some would say, psychopathic symptoms in the struggle that ensued. She used to retire to a distant room to pray, and her heart-pourings were overheard by some who said "they never heard so fervent prayers from any person." She kept "a death's head (or skull) in her closet." Her change of spirit was sudden and a source of great joy to the saints at Kidderminster. A crisis came with an illness so grave that little hope was entertained of her life. Baxter had an almost illimitable belief in the efficacy of prayer. A special public prayer-meeting was held, with fasting, on 30 December, 1659, in which "compassion made us all extraordinary fervent and God heard us and speedily delivered her." On that day she made a "covenant with God." On 10 April, 1660, she was well enough to attend a special thanksgiving-service for her seemingly miraculous restoration, and renewed her covenant.

To understand this story we must examine these private papers not only with sympathy and reverence, but also, seeing she had reason to keep them secret even from her husband during her lifetime, with unrelaxing intelligence.

Unless we are much mistaken in our interpretation, one of the chief sources of her nervous malady and physical breakdown was her love for Baxter, her feeling that it could not be fully requited, and her desperate struggle to conquer and renounce it. Before he left Kidderminster he almost certainly had come to suspect her secret, but whatever his own actual feelings towards her may have been, he was as yet far from giving her any encouragement. He is, of course, sympathetic with her spiritual struggles, but there is a note of almost cruel insistency in his pastoral counsel, couched though it is in quite general terms, against excessive creaturely love. The fullest allowance must be made for his puritan temper, his harsh idiom and other-worldly exhortation. Further allowance must be made for the fact that by temperament she was given to an inordinate affection for her mother. Baxter, summing up her character after her death, writes, "She was prone to over-love her relations and those good people (poor as well as rich) whom she thought most upright. The love was good; but the degree was too passionate."¹ We must therefore read these documents in the light of all the available evidence, and not yield too readily to any tendency to give them a romantic colouring. But when we have admitted all that can lead us to see in Baxter's words only a strong dissuasion directed against Margaret's former "glittering" life and against her extravagant affection for her mother, these factors in the personal problem must not be over-stressed.

¹ *Breviate*, p. 75.

The question arises whether Baxter's language is entirely such as any pastor of his views would give if these were the only factors in the situation. We do not think so. There sounds in it an unnecessarily implacable note of severity that indicates that he is beginning to have a private struggle of his own. It would seem that his own personal feelings are being moved by the dawning of a new emotion which he is determined to check. It is natural enough that he should urge her to turn from the love of the creature to the love of God, but it is not natural that he should be hard almost to pitilessness. When he suddenly left for London three days after her thanksgiving-service, he writes from there a stern letter almost commanding her and her mother not to follow him.

In her secret papers, written as they are with reserve and discretion, though meant only for her own eyes, she reveals her tortured heart:

I have now cause of sorrow for parting with my dear friends, my father, my pastor.¹ He is by Providence called away and going a long journey: what the Lord will do with him, I cannot foresee; it may be he is preparing some great mercy for us, and for his praise. I know not but such a day as this may be kept here on his account. The will of the Lord be done, for he is wise and good; we are his own, let him do with us what he pleaseth: all shall be good to them that love God. I have cause to be humbled that I have been so unprofitable under mercies and means; it may grieve me, now that he is gone, that there is so little that came from him left upon my soul. O let this quicken and stir me up to be more diligent in the use of all remaining helps and means. And if ever I should enjoy this mercy again, O let me make it appear that this night I was sensible of my neglect of it.²

Had Baxter hinted anything to her about the object of his visit to London? Had he told her that he was going to see the Earl of Lauderdale on momentous matters of Church and State? Is this the reason for her concern for him and for her distress of mind, or is there here no more than a sense of pathetic dependence on him for the religion he had brought her to experience?

There is unmistakably more. Consciously or unconsciously—try as she may to conceal it from him and even from herself—she is already passionately in love with Baxter. But she has no hope of its earthly fulfilment; he had never given her such encouragement; so far as words of religious counsel could, he had given her every discouragement. She must therefore school herself to break this wild infatuation, and look up to the heavenly life where there are no frustrations, where there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage, but they are as the

¹ "My father, my pastor," mean Baxter. Her father and step-father were both dead. "Friends" may be a misprint for friend.

² *Breviate*, pp. 19-20.

angels. There and only there may she love freely. What else can she have meant when she wrote in her privacy:

When the Lord shall take our carcases from the grave, and make us shine as the sun in glory; then, then shall friends meet and never part, and remember their sad and weary nights and days no more! Then may we love freely! ¹

But Baxter himself, whatever he knew or guessed or felt, obdurately holds her away. He writes almost coldly to that burning heart of youth, and, as we are already in her secret, we may be permitted perhaps to suspect his own. His words, apparently untouched by human passion, protest too much and seem self-protective, or is he blundering in the dark? He writes with chill precision:

(1) Your trouble of soul is either some *affliction*; (2) or some sin; (3) or the doubt of your *sincerity* and true grace.

If it be *sin*, it is either past or present: if past, why do you not repent, and thankfully accept your pardon? If *present*, it is *inward corruption*, or outward transgression. Whichever it be, if you love it, why do you grieve for it, or groan under it? If you grieve for it, why are you not willing to leave it, and be holy? ²

All most theologically correct and all most futile. The struggle continues. Baxter returns again and again to the effort to destroy his own fascination over her. Yet he seems at times to be weakening.

How hard is it to keep our hearts [*our* hearts, not *the* heart] in going too far even in honest affections towards the creature, while we are so backward to love God, who should have all the heart, the soul, and might! Too strong love to any, though it be good in the kind, may be sinful and hurtful in the degree. It will turn too many of your thoughts from God, and they will be too oft running after the beloved creature.

Is he still thinking solely of her love to her mother? He will pray for her; and he tells her what his prayers on her behalf shall be. They seem pointedly definite:

I will pray that no creature may seem greater, better, or more regardable or necessary to you than it is; and that you look on all as walking shadows, vanity and liars (that is, untrusty) further than you can see God in them, or they lead you up to them; that they may never be over-loved, over-feared, over-trusted, or their thoughts too much regarded. ³

Do these words quite fit the character of her mother or brother, and is this the natural language which even a Puritan would use who is merely trying to keep the daughter of a parishioner from being over-fondly attached to her mother

¹ *Breviate*, p. 21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

or too concerned about her brother's attitude? In the same secret papers there is another transcript of his hard counsel:

The best creature-affections have a mixture of creature-imperfections, and therefore need some gall to wean us from the faulty part: God must be known to be God, our rest, and therefore the best creature to be but a creature! O miserable world! (how long must I continue in it? And why is this wretched heart so loth to leave it?) where we can have no fire without smoke, and our dearest friends must be our grief; and when we begin in hope, and love and joy, before we are aware we fall into an answerable measure of distress. Learn by experience, when any condition is inordinately or excessively sweet to thee, to say, *from hence must be my sorrow*.

And it is almost certainly Margaret, not Baxter, who appends in brackets the heart's cry "[O how true!]"¹ Baxter does not acknowledge that he is the author of these fragments which she has transcribed, but there can be little doubt that he wrote them.

Let us turn from him to this young girl racked with exhausting efforts after self-conquest and holy purity. She writes a confessional passage:

Heaven is my home; God in Christ is all my happiness; and where my treasure is, there my heart should be: Come away, O my heart, from vanity: mount heavenward, and be not dead, or dull, if thou wouldst be free from trouble, and taste of real joy and pleasure. Hath not experience yet taught thee that creature-comforts, though they be roses, have their pricks; canst not thou be content to look on them, and smell them at a distance, and covet no other use while thou art in the garden where they grow, and be content to leave them there behind thee? If thou must needs have them in thy bosom, thou must scratch thy fingers to get them; and when thou hast them, though the smell awhile delight thee, they will quickly wither, and are gone. Away then, O carnal heart; retire to God, the only satisfactory object. There mayest thou love without all danger of excess! Let thy love to God be fixed and transcendent. Amen.²

This was her renewed "Covenant with God," written on the day "set apart for returning thanks to God for his mercy in delivering me from the gates of death."

She could have known nothing of Pascal's secret paper and parchment of resignation "total and sweet" dated 1654, but found, sewn up in his doublet, after his death in 1662. Yet there is affinity between intense renunciations everywhere, and we seem to hear an echo of his words, "From about half-past ten at night to about half-past twelve: Fire!" in her own less happy but hardly less resigned conclusion:

Rest! O sweet word! The weary shall have rest, they shall rest in the Lord.

¹ *Breviate*, p. 43.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

April 10th. On Thursday night at twelve of the clock; a day and night never to be forgotten by the least of God's mercies, yea less than the least, thy unworthy, unthankful, hard-hearted creature,

M. CHARLTON.

It was for this occasion that Baxter wrote the verses: "Now, it belongs not to my care," modified into the hymn: "Lord, it belongs not to my care." These, Margaret, whom Baxter after marriage addressed as "Dear Heart," signed as her personal dedication.

His *Autobiography* makes but two passing references¹ to his marriage, for he had already written this *Breviate* of his wife's life. Nor must we here yield to the temptation to enlarge overmuch upon it. The rest of the story must be told very summarily. Baxter was probably eager to haste to London instead of accepting the Earl of Lauderdale's proposal that he should visit Baxter at Kidderminster. He thought perhaps that he would thereby escape "a condition inordinately or excessively sweet" to himself. But, in the face of his strong disapproval, Margaret and her mother removed to London. How their love-affairs—or should we still say her love-affairs?—proceeded we do not know, except that rumour gave breath to the incredible whisper that Baxter was secretly married. This was false: but observant eyes had not been idle nor malicious tongues silent, and it had been noted that there was more than a pastoral tenderness between himself and Margaret. In 1661 Mrs. Hanmer died, and her daughter Margaret was left friendless. Baxter had no regular pastorate. Indications now abounded of coming ecclesiastical troubles that might leave him permanently without charge and therefore free to marry. Margaret needed a protector. Love could not for ever be denied. The rumour had some basis in fact:

And it everywhere rung about partly as a wonder, and partly as a crime. . . . Insomuch that at last the Lord Chancellor told me . . . for they affirmed it near a year before it came to pass. And I think the king's marriage was scarce more talked of than mine.²

Their ages were unsuitable, their social positions unequal, and, worse than all, Baxter was a known advocate of the celibacy of the clergy. It was even for the Court a scandal of rare bouquet. It could hardly have been more sensational had he scaled a wall with a ladder of ropes. "How would my enemies Champeaux and Anselm have triumphed had they seen this," said Abélard, who had. Baxter too had his Champeaux and Anselm. Bishop Morley saw to it that the story lost nothing in the telling. And the king himself, who lacked virtue but never lacked wit, must have excelled

¹ One of these is suppressed and does not appear in the Folio. It is restored to the text, *ante*, p. 249.

² *Ante*, p. 173.

himself in brilliance as he clinked glasses with his merry mistresses and drank jesting toasts to a chaplain-in-ordinary who had refused to become a bishop. But however rumour may have rioted, the facts are that

from the first thoughts of it, many changes and stoppages intervened, and long delays, till I was silenced and ejected with many hundreds more; and so being separated from my old pastoral charge, which was enough to take up all my time and labour, some of my dissuading reasons were then over. At last, on 10 September, 1662, we were married in Bennet Fink church by Mr. Samuel Clark (yet living), having been before contracted by Mr. Simeon Ash, both in the presence of Mr. *Henry Ashurst* and Mrs. *Ash*. She consented to these conditions of our marriage: (1) That I would have nothing that before our marriage was hers; that I (who wanted no outward supplies) might not seem to marry her for covetousness. (2) That she would so alter her affairs that I might be entangled in no law-suits. (3) That she would expect none of my time which my ministerial work should require. When we were married, her sadness and melancholy vanished; counsel did something to it, and contentment something; and being taken up with our household affairs did somewhat. And we lived in inviolated love and mutual complacency, sensible of the benefit of mutual help. These near nineteen years I know not that ever we had any breach in point of love or point of interest, save only that she somewhat grudged that I had persuaded her for my quietness to surrender so much of her estate, to a disabling her from helping others so much as she earnestly desired.¹

Never minister had a better comrade. She had wit, practical shrewdness and a sound instinct for affairs. She gave herself with utter devotion and unworldly sagacity to charitable labours unspoiled by taint of sectarian partisanship. She was a woman of unusual culture and knew Latin, Greek and Hebrew—and knew them sufficiently well to give good advice to Baxter's nephew and heir, William, who became the famous classical scholar and eccentric antiquarian. With her husband's ideals she was in complete accord. He tells us enough to know that she had an amiable temper and admirable tact. "She rarely ever spoke in anger, or in an angry tone." But he acknowledges that she was sometimes impatient when her enthusiastic hopes for some of her projects disappointed her. And he was sometimes "impatient of her impatience." And he says—and we must discount what he writes "under the power of melting grief" immediately after her death—"My dear wife did look for more good in me, and more help in me than she found, especially lately in my weakness and decay. We are all like pictures that must not be looked at too near."²

But when all is said, it must have been, except that it was

¹ *Breviate*, pp. 46-7.

² *Ibid.*, p. 87.

a childless union, as near an "ideal marriage" as may be hoped of man and woman. She would, however, have been more than human if now and again "her strangely vivid and great wit," however tempered by her "very sober conversation" (to quote John Howe's sermon at her funeral), had not loosened a dart occasionally at her husband. In the *Memoirs of Ambrose Barnes* (1627-1710), published by the Surtees Society, is an account of a lively domestic scene which, even if we had not Baxter's own statement that "she could not bear a disputing contradiction," and if the story were not on other grounds impossible, might appear to have some verisimilitude:

One night, at old Alderman Ashurst's . . . at supper, good old father Ash began to express what hopes he had from the king's being nearly come in,¹ when Mr. Baxter took occasion to reflect upon Cromwell, and what giddy fanatical times the times of the late Commonwealth were. He instanced in two men, whom he one day saw come into a church-porch, where finding the minister in divine service, as the Common Prayer is called, fell to grumble, "Porridge yet! what the devil, porridge yet!" This poor story Mr. Baxter could not be hindered from printing afterwards over and over.² Mr. Barnes beginning to say something in reply, was prevented by the two gentlewomen, who bitterly inveighed against the old man's peevishness and partiality. Mrs. Ash said it was unreasonable and unjust to take the measures of a nation from the indiscretions of particular persons, and basely ungrateful to reflect on the noble instruments of those revolutions, for the sake of one or two sorry fellows. "I tell ye," said Mr. Baxter, with his usual acrimony, "I never liked the spirit of those times!" And "I tell ye," said his wife, Mrs. Baxter, "I as little like your spirit, who I know speak out of resentment, which hardens you to disparage that which I am persuaded, whatever frail and perfidious men might be guilty of in the part they acted in it, was the work of God." The dialogue had gone on to a quarrel, had not the two aldermen interposed and diverted the discourse.³

The story is absurd and incredible as recorded. Ash died on the eve of St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662, a few days, therefore, before Baxter's marriage. The touch of malice in the telling of it is so obvious that a discriminating reader hardly needs to have this contradiction or to be warned that the narrator is untrustworthy and shows elsewhere a spiteful prejudice against Baxter. The facts are as Baxter, with scrupulous candour, reports them. He and his wife were lovely and pleasant in their lives. She supported him with unflinching heroism through all his labours. She approved of

¹ This would mean that Ash was talking reminiscently, for the king had been restored two years before Baxter's marriage.

² *Vide ante*, pp. 37, 203.

³ *Memoirs of Ambrose Barnes*, pp. 151-2.

his refusal of a bishopric and loved him the more for declining the proffered bribe. She went with him to prison and—a point that touched Baxter, for he italicises the record—“*she brought her best bed thither.*” Within her frail body burnt the steady flame of an intrepid spirit:

She was exceeding impatient with any nonconforming ministers who shrunk for fear of suffering, or that were over-querulous and sensible of their wants and dangers: and would have no man be a minister that had not so much self-denial as to lay down all at the feet of Christ, and count no cost of suffering too dear to serve him. She greatly hated choosing or using the sacred ministry for wealth, ease or honour, or any worldly end, serving the flesh under the name of serving Christ, and looking to be revered and honoured in this taking of God's name in vain.¹

Baxter speaks of her quick apprehension of practical affairs and says he never knew her equal. Not only in this sphere does he admit that he knew less than she, but even in some of the most subtle cases of conscience she proved her superior genius:

Yea, I will say that which they that believe me to be no liar will wonder at: *Except in cases that require learning and skill in theological difficulties, she was better at resolving a case of conscience than most divines that ever I knew in all my life.* I often put cases to her, which she suddenly so resolved, as to convince me of some degree of oversight in my own resolution. Insomuch that of late years, I confess that I was used to put all, save secret cases, to her, and hear what she could say . . . and she would . . . give me a more exact resolution than I could do.²

If his great *Christian Directory* had been written later than it was—it was nearly all written in 1664–5, though not published until 1672–3—curiosity would prompt the question, for how much of it was his wife responsible?

She had many morbid symptoms all through her life, and for twenty years she had a definite obsession which made her fear “the overthrow of her understanding,” though she was generally of a settled cheerfulness which, until her last illness, seems only once to have been disturbed by a “distraction.” But the terrible dread was lamentably fulfilled in the delirium of her final sickness, for it is clear from the *Breviate* itself, apart from existing MS. evidence,³ that for many days before her death her mind had given way. She died in their “most pleasant and convenient house in South-ampton Square,” after twelve days’ illness, on 14 June, 1681, and was buried on 17 June in Christ Church, in the ruins, in

¹ *Breviate*, p. 61.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 67–8.

³ *Vide* the suppressed passage restored, *ante*, p. 249.

her mother's grave. There remains to-day no trace of the grave. But we are told by Baxter that

the grave was the highest next the old altar or table in the chancel on which her daughter <Baxter's wife> had caused a very fair, rich, large marble-stone to be laid, Anno 1661, about twenty years ago. . . . But Christ's church on earth is liable to those changes of which the Jerusalem above is in no danger. In the doleful flames of London, 1666, the fall of the church broke this great marble all to pieces, and it proved no lasting monument; and I hope this paper-monument, erected by one that is following, even at the door, in some passion indeed of love and grief, but in sincerity of truth, will be more publicly useful and durable than that marble-stone was.¹

¹ *Breviate*, pp. 93-4.



NOTES

PART ONE

Page 3. *Born*. Orme's *Life* (pp. 1, 298) makes an unnecessary difficulty of the dates of Baxter's birth and baptism. His mistake is due to his informant, Mr. Williams, having read xixth as sixth, an easy error. The entry is as follows:

Richard sonne & heyre of Richard Baxter of Eaton
Constantyne gent & of Beatrice his wief bap
tised the xixth of November 1615°.

Page 6. *Tabor and pipe*. A livelier account appears in Baxter's *Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day* (1671), p. 117.

"I cannot forget that in my youth in those late times, when we lost the labours of some of our conformable godly teachers for not reading the Book of Sports and Dancing on the Lord's-days, one of my father's own tenants was the town-piper, hired by the year (for many years together), and the place of the dancing-assembly was not an hundred yards from our door, and we could not on the Lord's-day either read a chapter, or pray, or sing a psalm, or catechise, or instruct a servant, but with the noise of the pipe and tabor, and the shoutings in the street, continually in our ears; and even among a tractable people we were the common scorn of all the rabble in the streets, and called Puritans, Precisians and Hypocrites, because we rather chose to read the Scriptures than to do as they did (though there was no savour of Nonconformity in our family). And when the people by the Book were allowed to play and dance out of public service-time, they could so hardly break off their sports that many a time the reader was fain to stay till the piper and players would give over; and sometimes the morrice-dancers would come into the church in all the linen and scarfs, and antic-dresses, with morrice-bells jingling at their legs. And as soon as common-prayer was read, did haste out presently to their play again. Was this a heavenly conversation? Was this a help to holiness and devotion?"

Page 6. *The free-school at Wroxeter*. This has been accepted to mean a school at Donnington that served the two parishes of Uppington and Wroxeter (*see* map). The words used, "at Wroxeter," "at that ancient Uriconium," do not naturally suggest the parish of Wroxeter as distinct from the town. On the other hand, we have the evidence of a brass in Wroxeter Church commemorating Thomas Alcocke, yeoman, who died 1627, when Baxter was twelve and lately come home from Rowton. Alcocke gave a bell to Wroxeter, and left money for the poor and for the maintenance of a free grammar school for Wroxeter and Uppington. Possibly after Alcocke's death the school was moved from Wroxeter town to

Donnington, for the convenience of the two adjoining parishes. But so far I have not been able to satisfy myself on the historical facts, and further evidence would be welcomed.

Page 6. *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*. Pliny in his *Natural History* writes *ne supra crepidam judicaret* (Valpy's Ed. (1826), vol. x. p. 4590). He attributes the saying to Apelles. "His order was when he had finished a peece of worke or painted table . . . to set it forth in some open gallerie or thorow-fare to be seene of folke that passed by, and himselfe would lie close behind it to hearken what faults were found therewith; preferring the judgement of the common people before his owne, . . . and as the tale is told, it fell out upon a time, that a shoemaker as he went by seemed to controule his workmanship about the shoe or pantophle that he had made to a picture, and namely, that there was one latchet fewer than there should bee: Apelles acknowledging that the man said true indeed, mended that fault by next morning. . . . The same shoemaker coming again the morrow after and finding the want supplied . . . tooke some pride unto himselfe . . . and was so bold as to cavill at somewhat about the leg. Apelles could not endure that. . . . Sirrha (quoth he), remember you are but a shoemaker, and therefore meddle no higher, I advise you, than with shoes: which word also of his came afterwards to bee a common proverbe, *Ne sutor supra crepidam*."—Pliny's *Nat. Hist.*, bk. xxxv. c. x.; Philemon Holland's Eng. Trans. (1601), p. 538.

Page 8. *Grown a fuddler*. Cp.

"For such a friend I had, though after all,
Himself became my warning by his fall."

Poet. Frag.

And see *Divine Life* (1664), p. 319.

Page 9. *The mathematics*. "Mathematics, which I have least of, I find a pretty manlike sport."—*Knowledge and Love compared* (1689). Collected Works (Orme), vol. xv. p. 16.

Pages 10, 11. *Hardness of my heart. God breaketh not all men's hearts alike.*

"I could have kiss'd the place where I did kneel,
If what my tongue had spoke, my heart could feel."

Poet. Frag.

Page 11. *To this very day*. An. 1664 (*marg.*).

Page 13. *The greatest snow*. An. 1634 (*marg.*). In the Kidderminster parish register are entries (31 Jan. and 1 Feb.) recording burials of men "starved in the snowe."

Page 19. *A new oath*. An. 1640 (*marg.*).

Page 20. *The Scots came*. An. 1639 (*marg.*).

Page 21. *Petition the king for a parliament*. An. 1640 (*marg.*).

Page 24. *Musculus's "Commonplaces."* Musculus was the author of *Loci Communes*, which in translation seem to have served at times for sermons in English churches. He was Lutheran minister at Augsburg, 1531-1547, when he dealt with the Anabaptists as mentioned *post* p. 107. See note, Bp. of Chester's *Excerpt*, p. 8.

Page 24. *He gave a bond.* The original is preserved among the Baxter MSS., vol. iv. (Treatises). It is dated 26 Feb., 1640-1.

Page 26. *As a dying man to dying men.* See p. 79, where the phrase is repeated.

"I preached as never sure to preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men."

Poet. Frag.

Page 28. *Loathed infants.* See Introd. Essay, *ante* p. xxxiv, and p. 117. Baxter has been misunderstood on this point, as also on his doctrine of hell. When he writes "if this were not true" he does not mean "if it were not true that God hated or loathed infants," but "if it were not true that God loathes to see parents neglect to have their infants baptised." He put great stress on baptism (as on ordination), but did not think it of absolute necessity in all circumstances. And however literally he may have described the torments of hell, he held that "as the joys of heaven are beyond our conceiving, so also are the pains of hell." *Saints' Everlasting Rest*, Part III. c. 4, § 8 (1st Ed., p. 328). "So that as the enjoyment of God is the heaven of the Saints, so the loss of God is the hell of the ungodly." *Ibid.*, Part III. c. 1, § 4 (p. 272).

Page 33. *The king . . . was raising a war.* An. 1641 (*marg.*).

Page 36. *Malignants.* Fuller has a facetious derivation of this term. "The deduction thereof being disputable; whether from bad fire or bad fuel, *malus ignis* or *malum lignum*: but this is sure, betwixt both, the name made a great combustion."—Orme's *Life*, p. 35 n.

Page 37. *We must stay till he is out of his pottage.* Until he had finished the Prayer Book "preliminaries." This was for the railers, but the soup before the solid meal, i.e. the sermon. This shocked Baxter's sense of reverence and of the dignity of liturgical worship. Hence he was regarded by the sectaries as belonging to the "men of too large principles, who supped the antichristian pottage, though we would not eat the flesh" (p. 203). Cp. Appendix II., p. 275.

Page 41. *Alcester.* The text of the sermon was "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence." Clark's *Lives* (1683), Baxter's *To the Reader*.

Page 45. *Coventry . . . great loss in Cornwall.* An. 1644 (*marg.*).

Page 47. *The army being ready to march.* An. 1645 (*marg.*).

Page 54. *Sherborn Castle*. Baxter is in error in dating the taking of this castle (15 Aug.) after the surrender of Bristol (11 Sept.). There are other minor inaccuracies. See Powicke's *Life*, p. 73.

Page 54. *Clubmen*. "Bands of half-armed countrymen, numbering some thousands and playing much the part of the *francs-tireurs* of modern war."—Frederic Harrison's *Cromwell*, p. 95.

Page 60. *Cornet Joyce*. When Joyce, being asked by the king for his authority, pointed to the five hundred men on their horses in the courtyard, Charles pleasantly replied, "As well-written a commission, and with as fine a frontispiece, as I have ever seen in my life."—Morley's *Cromwell*, p. 231.

Page 62. *He would not when others would*. Ireton, who saw through the king's game of playing off the parliament against the army, stoutly addressed his sovereign: "Sir, you have an intention to be arbitrator between the parliament and us, and we mean to be so between you and parliament."—Ludlow's *Memoirs* (Firth's Ed.), vol. i. 155.

Page 63. *A scaffold*. An. 1648 (*marg.*).

Page 64. *The king . . . out of the way*. An. 1649 (*marg.*).

Page 66. *Traitors*. An. 1651 (*marg.*).

Page 69. *Cromwell . . . guilty of treason and rebellion*. Very like to Maximus in the days of Gratian and Theodosius (*marg.*).

Page 70. *A juncto*. An. 1653 (*marg.*).

Page 71. *Westminster Assembly*. Clarendon, in his *Hist. of the Reb.*, bk. v., says, "Some of them infamous in their lives and conversations, and most of them of very mean parts in learning, if not of scandalous ignorance."

Milton dedicated his work on *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* to the Assembly. In that dedication he speaks of it as a "select assembly," "of so much piety and wisdom," "a learned and memorable synod" in which "piety, learning, and prudence were housed." But after some of them had denounced his work and he had been brought for it before the House of Lords, he published the attack on the Assembly which appeared later in his *Fragment of the Hist. of Eng.* See Orme's *Life*, pp. 70, 71 n.

Page 73. *Vanity and sterility*. A posthumous book of Mr. Sterry's is since published (*marg.*). With characteristic candour Baxter revised his opinion of Sterry in a contrite tribute, though still criticising his doctrine. See *Cath. Theol.* (1675), part iii. p. 107.

Page 76. *Gold bullet*. See *Introd. Essay*, p. xxv.

Page 77. *Folio books*. No unreal peril. Gerard J. Vossius was

thus killed in his library at Amsterdam (1649). See Bp. of Chester's *Excerpt*, p. xix.

Page 78. *Lest I prove myself proud indeed*. "But I will not rob God of his glory to avoid the appearance of ostentation, lest I be proud of seeming not to be proud."—*A Treatise of Self-Denial*, The Epistle Monitory.

Page 79. *As a dying man to dying men*. See note *ante* on the same phrase on p. 26.

Page 80. *My single life*. Baxter was a strong advocate of the celibacy of the clergy. Referring to the Roman Catholic discipline on this subject, he writes, "It's pity that for a better cause we can no more imitate them in wisdom and self-denial, where it may be done."—*Reformed Pastor* (1656), p. 239. Cp. *Self-Denial*, c. lii.; *Christian Directory*, Tome II. c. i., and *ante*, p. 273.

Page 83. *Sir Ralph Clare*. The folio prints two closing brackets, one after Hammond and the other after sequestered. The sentence is involved, but the meaning is that Sir Ralph's entire ecclesiastical attitude, and not merely his coming to church only once a Sunday and abstaining from the Sacrament, proved a serious hindrance to Baxter's ministry. Cp. p. 159. An etched portrait of Sir Ralph Clare appears in Nash's *Worcestershire*, vol. ii. 45. On the whole controversy see Powicke's *Life*, p. 177.

Page 84. *Mr. Thomas Hall*. Thomas Hall. B.D. (1610–1665), a sternly anti-episcopalian Presbyterian minister. There are valuable MSS. remains of this divine in Dr. Williams' Library. There is a Thomas Hall Library, being a collection of the books of this learned man, in the Birmingham Reference Library. This separately catalogued section should be better known and appreciated than it is. For the life and work of Thomas Hall, see Dr. Powicke's article in *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 8, No. 1., Jan. 1924.

Page 85. *Having been a prodigal in his youth*. Cromwell wrote at the age of thirty-nine to his cousin, Mrs. St. John, "You know what my manner of life hath been. Oh, I lived in and loved darkness and hated light; I was a chief, the chief of sinners." But, as Frederic Harrison comments, "So, indeed, said St. Paul."—*Cromwell*, p. 16.

Pages 87–88. *Chief person*. The folio has long marginal quotations from Bacon's Essay 51, *On Faction*, beginning "Mean men in their rising."

Page 92. *Moss of a dead man's skull*. See *Introd. Essay*, p. xxv.

Page 98. *A Treatise of Self-denial* (1660). In "A Premonition concerning this Second Edition" (1675) we have Baxter's selection of his favourites among his own writings. "And I must say, that

of all the books which I have written, I peruse none so often for the use of my own soul in its daily work as my *Life of Faith* and this of *Self-denial*, and the last part of the *Saints' Rest*."

Page 103. *Soul-experiments*. Experiences of the soul. This masterpiece of ripe reflection and self-analysis is printed in this and the following chapter without any omissions. It has been separately published and excellently edited by the late Bishop of Chester (Dr. Jayne) in *An Excerpt from Reliquiæ Baxterianæ* (1910). It contains a preface rich in quotations of modern tributes to Baxter's greatness, some valuable notes (to which I am indebted for some of my own), an abridgment of Sir James Stephen's *Essay on Baxter*, and appendices.

Page 107. *Musculus*. See note *ante*.

Pages 107, 108. *My daily bread and drink*. The Creed as the sum of belief; the Lord's Prayer as the sum of desire and aspiration; the Ten Commandments as the sum of ethical and religious practice. See *The Poor Man's Family Book* (1674), Question 2 of "The Shortest Catechism."

Page 109. *Aquinas, Scotus, Ockam*, etc. "I had the unhappiness from my youth to be inclined to strict definition and accurate logical explications, and to abhor confused harangues; and therefore the (now despised) Schoolmen were my pleasant study, next to the Bible and practical divinity."—*A Reply to Mr. Tho. Beverley's Answer* (1691), p. 3.

Page 110. *The witness of the indwelling Spirit . . . a certain internal assertion*. It is tempting to make the textual emendation: a certain internal affection, as the Bishop of Chester has done in his *Excerpt*. It is, I think, unnecessary and therefore unjustifiable in view of what has been said of Baxter's mysticism in my *Introd. Essay*. What Baxter means, I suggest, is a positive subjective affirmation accepted (credulously or fanatically) as that of the Spirit speaking inwardly a direct, definite and quasi-articulate message with all the unique and special authority of a prophetic "Thus saith the Lord." In his *Unreasonableness of Infidelity* he states his doctrine of the Spirit's witness clearly and there uses the term "inward word or enunciation."

Baxter's insistence on the witness of the indwelling Spirit is quite in accordance with his profound and sanely mystical belief in the operations of the Holy Spirit in the individual inward life. He had no quarrel with the best Quakers on the fact of the "inward light," but only on the mode and nature of the fact. But he resented their too exclusive dependence upon it and their appropriation of it as a kind of monopoly of their own sect. "I may ask the *Quakers and Scorners*, whether the Holy Spirit do not dwell and work in such among us, as our dear Friend now deceased was."—*A True Believer's Choice and Pleasure* (1680), p. 34. No doubt his bitter antagonism to what he regarded as the fanaticism of the Quakers, especially the

early Quakers, made him understate his own mystical experience. This antagonism arose partly from the arrogant and outrageous behaviour of some of the earlier fanatics, and partly from his fear of conceding too much to subjectivism and "bare believing." But he feared no less a *merely* objective historical religion which he found over-emphasised in the externalism of the Roman Church. "Others observing this error fly so far from it as to make Faith itself and Christ to be scarce necessary: so a man have but God's image, say they, upon his soul, what matter is it which way he comes by it—whether by Christ or by other means. And so they take all history of Christ to be a mere accident to our necessary belief, and the precepts only of holiness to be of absolute necessity. The former contemn God under a pretence of extolling Christ. The latter contemn Christ under pretence of extolling God alone."—*Richard Baxter's Confession of his Faith* (1655), Preface, Sig.(d). Baxter thus stood for the "middle verity" and countered the Quakers, Seekers and Ranters with a mysticism balanced by rational intellectualism and by the witness of the *outdwelling* Spirit in history, especially in the guidance and development of the Christian Church, and in the Revelation given in Holy Scripture. On the other hand, for his brilliant corrective to one-sided intellectualism, see his *Arrogancy of Reason*, published without author's name in 1655, and as part of the *Unreasonableness of Infidelity*. The best example known to me of Baxter's mystically passionate utterance, is a passage, not wholly unworthy of St. Augustine at his highest reach, which appears in *The Reasonableness of the Christian Religion* (1667), pp. 457-463.

Page 114. *Spanhemius*. Frederick Spanhemius, 1600-1649. Author of *Exercitationes de gratia universali* and Professor of Theology at Leyden. His son, Ezekiel, was F.R.S. and was buried in Westminster Abbey. *Excerpt*, pp. 22, 23.

Page 114. *Crocus*. 1586-1655. Professor of Divinity at Bremen.

Page 114. *Bergius*. 1587-1658. One of his works was translated into English with the title: *The Pearle of Peace and Concord, or a Treatise of the Pacification betwixt the Dissenting Churches of Christ*, London, 1655.

Page 116. *I am not so narrow in my principles of Church communion*. The folio reads: not too narrow. The title-page of *A Treatise of Knowledge and Love compared* (1689) bears the inscription: "By Richard Baxter, who by God's blessing on long and hard Studies, hath learned to know that he knoweth but little, and to suspend his Judgment on Uncertainties, and to take Great, Necessary, Certain things, for the food of his Faith and Comforts, and the Measure of his Church-Communion."

Page 120. *Moderating Papists*. Cassander, 1515-1566. An energetic and candid reconciler, who served Ferdinand I. in conciliating his Lutheran subjects. His works were condemned by the Council of

Trent. Hugo Grotius, 1583-1645. The famous jurist and author of *De Jure Belli et Pacis* and *De Veritate Religionis Christianæ*. See Art. in *Encyc. Brit.*

Page 122. *Munster Anabaptists: David George*. These were led in their excesses at Munster, Westphalia, not by Münzer, but by John of Leyden. The followers of David George (1501-1556) are referred to as "The Family of Love" and "Davidists."

Page 122. *Campanella*. 1568-1639. An original and daring Dominican writer, who suffered seven times on the rack. The author of *Civitas Solis*, the utopian *City of the Sun*.

Page 122. *Illuminati*. A footnote to Bishop of Chester's *Excerpt* makes the probable conjecture that Baxter is not here referring to *Illuminati* but to French *Illuminés* or *Guerinets*, who developed Antinomian tendencies and brought on themselves repressive measures.

Page 122. *Scultetus*. 1566-1625. Theological Professor at Heidelberg. Bishop Hall translated two of his treatises into English. Baxter, who states that he had not the vulgar tongue of any foreign country, would know him in these translations.

Page 124. *Covetousness, Pride*. "And this I dare say, that the evidentest victory that I have had against any sin (except covetousness) is against Pride; and if I have not conquered this, I have conquered none; and yet I feel such relics of it that I am forced to suspect it."—*Confession of his Faith* (1655), Preface. See *Introd. Essay*, p. xvii.

Page 124. *To despise earth is easy*. Wordsworth has a note to the lines of the *Excursion*, Bk. iv., 130 f.

"'Tis by comparison, an easy task
Earth to despise, etc.

See, upon this subject, Baxter's most interesting review of his own opinions and sentiments in the decline of life. It may be found (lately reprinted) in Dr. Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Biography* [2nd Ed., 1818, vol. v., pp. 559, etc.] (W. W.)."

Page 126. *Prodigious lies*. See Baxter's *Church-History* (1680) on *What History is credible, and what not* (after the Preface).

Page 127. *Thuanus*. 1553-1617. Author of *Historiæ sui temporis* (1546-1607) and royal librarian at Paris.

Page 127. *Guicciardini*. 1483-1540. The Florentine author of *Storia d'Italia*.

Page 127. *Paulus Venetus*. 1552-1623. Professor of Philosophy at Venice and a correspondent of Galileo; author of *A History of the Council of Trent* (1619).

Page 127. *Bucholtzer*. 1529-1584. A pupil of Melancthon at Wittenberg; afterwards a preacher of eminence.

Page 127. *Crato*. Kraft, 1519-1585. Physician to Ferdinand I.

Page 127. *Platerus*. 1536-1614. Professor at Basle and son of a distinguished physician.

Page 127. *Genebrard*. 1537-1597. Archbishop of Aix, a teacher of St. Francis de Sales in Hebrew.

Page 127. *Baronius*. 1538-1607. Author of *Annales* in twelve folios, refuting the first Protestant Church-History, *The Magdeburg Centuries*.

Page 127. *Indians*. The Bishop of Chester in his *Excerpt* suggests *Audians*, followers of Audius of Syria in the fourth century, an ascetic sect also called Anthropomorphites.

Page 129. *Junius*. 1545-1602. A Huguenot. Calamy narrates how when Junius was asked which was his favourite book, answered: "My *Irenicon*, for I have writ my other books as a divine, but I have written that as a Christian."

PART TWO

Page 136. *One through Presbyterian*. Thomas Hall of King's Norton, Birmingham. See note *ante*, p. 283.

Page 137. *Thus associating in Worcestershire*. Associations were also formed in Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cornwall, Devon, Herefordshire (perhaps), Norfolk, Nottingham, Shropshire and North Wales (particularly Flint).—Powicke's *Life*, p. 171.

Page 142. *Lauderdale and Baxter*. In the folio this passage is much modified. It is here restored from the Baxter MSS., vol. iii. (Treatises). It appears in Dr. Powicke's *Life*, p. 189.

It is important as telling us why Baxter suddenly went up to London. The words "and for other reasons" may suggest that he wanted to wean Margaret Charlton from her love of him. See Appendix II. But they may mean something ecclesiastically and politically momentous which remains tantalisingly undisclosed.

Lauderdale was not laying a trap for Baxter. He admired Baxter with affection and sincerity, and to the end retained such fidelity to him as was possible in a man of Lauderdale's character even in its tragic degradation. At this stage in his career Lauderdale was, in the main, earnest in his statesmanship and sincere in his piety, although he soon suffered moral decadence and final collapse. Now he was eager to enlist Baxter's help in the project of restoring the king, and with good reason. Baxter was in principle a Royalist all through his life; and Lauderdale knew that at this time Baxter's

influence among the moderate Episcopalians and leading Presbyterians was supreme. It is no exaggeration to say that if he had thrown his whole weight passionately against the Restoration it would never have taken place at all, or only after a further long and more terrible outbreak of civil war. Baxter was calmly deliberate and entirely disinterested. Except as to the character of Charles, he was not fooled, though many who acted with him were; he had no illusions about what the consequences would be to himself and to his nonconformist brethren. He could have said truly, "The Holy Ghost testifieth unto me . . . saying that bonds and afflictions abide me, but I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself so that I may accomplish my course." What he actually did say was, "We all look to be silenced and some or many of us imprisoned or banished; but yet we will do our parts to restore the king, because no foreseen consequence must hinder us from our duty."—Folio, part ii. p. 216.

For the letters of Lauderdale, see *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 7, No. 1, July 1922.

Page 143. *In that sermon.* The last day of April 1660 I preached to the parliament (*marg.*). This was *A Sermon of Repentance* (1660). See p. 99.

Page 143. *Vote home the king.* May 1, 1660, the parliament owned the king and voted his recall (*marg.*).

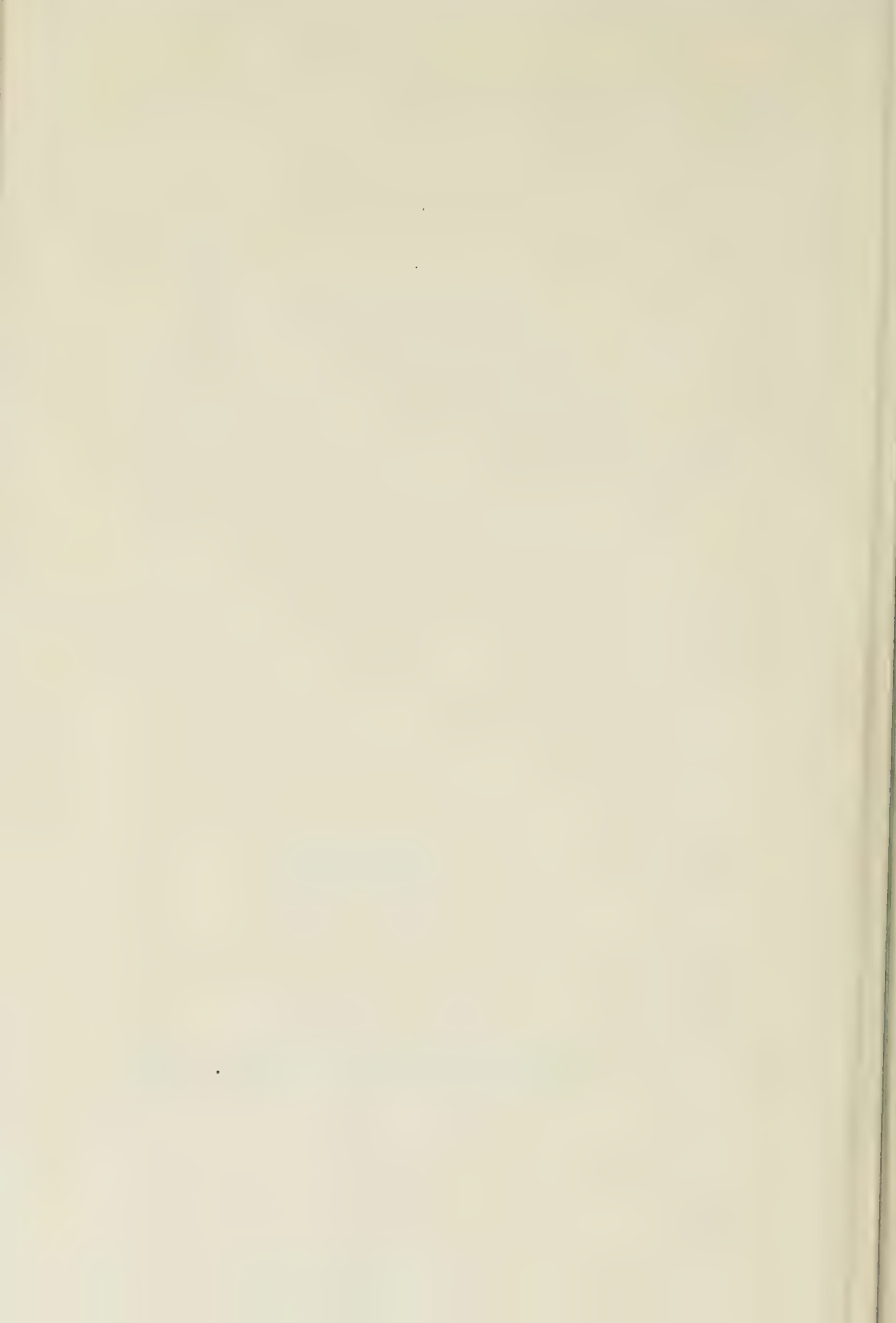
Page 143. *Solemn thanksgiving. A Sermon of Right Rejoicing* (1660). See p. 99.

Page 144. *The allurements of Venus.* This suppressed passage, never before published, appears in the Baxter MSS., vol. iii. (Treatises). See facsimile of the passage, p. xiv.

Page 145. *She scarce ever heard a lie.* In Brown's *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 2nd Series, Letter to John Cairns, appears a pathetic note. In a copy of the folio, which belonged to the Countess of Balcarres (afterwards Argyle) and which bears her autograph, the following appears in her own aged and tremulous handwriting:

"I can say w^t truth I never in all my lyff did hear hir ly, and what she said, if it was not trew, it was by others suggested to hir, as y^t she wold embak (? come back) on Wednesday. She belived she wold, bot thy took hir, alles! from me who never did sie hir mor. The minester of Cuper, Mr. John Magill, did sie hir at Paris in the convent. Said she was a knowing and vertuous person, and hed retined the living principels of our relidgon, which made him say it was good to grund young persons weel in ther relidgion, as she was one it appired weel grunded."—Edin. Ed. 1861. Second Series, p. 246 n.

Gilbert Burnet visited her. "He saw little to admire in French Romanism or the monastic systems. He visited many monasteries. He was allowed to converse with several nuns 'at grates,' specially with the daughter of Lady Balcarres. This young lady was a convert



to Romanism and had taken the veil, but she had grown weary of the nun's life and wished to escape. She and Burnet formed a plan for this, which, however, came to nothing."—*A Life of Gilbert Burnet*, by Clarke and Foxcroft, p. 51.

Page 145. *Since dead*. The MS. reads: "put her into a nunnery where she now remaineth. Ere long she sent a letter," etc. In the margin of the MS. is a note: "She is since dead."

Page 146. *Gratifying . . . chief Presbyterians*. "The army being not disbanded, the king thought convenient in some measure to cajole the Presbyterian party; and therefore Mr. Richard Baxter, and Mr. Edmund Calamy, were appointed to be chaplains in ordinary. But he could not forbear, on some occasions, to discover his contempt of the men of that sort."—Ludlow's *Memoirs* (Firth's Ed.), vol. ii. 283.

Page 146. *King's chaplains*. 25 June, 1660. "I was sworn the king's chaplain in ordinary" (*marg.*).

Page 151. *Declaration*. This was received 4 Sept.

Page 152. *Father's book of meditations*. The *Eikon Basilike*.

Page 153. *One of them whispered*. Dr. Wallis (*marg.*).

Page 157. *He died in the Bishopric*. The MS. omits this from the text, but inserts in the margin: "He died Bishop of Norwich this year 1676 in August."

Page 160. *A little lime and dust*. "Mr. Baxter without visible disturbance, sat down in the pulpit: after the hurry was over, he resum'd his Discourse, and said, to compose their Minds; We are in the Service of God to prepare our selves, that we may be fearless at the great noise of the dissolving World, when the Heavens shall pass away, and the Elements melt in fervent heat; the Earth also, and the Works therein shall be burnt up."—Bates, *Funeral Sermon* (1692), p. 100. For a similar panic, see p. 230 and note *post*, p. 294.

Page 162. *Liturgy . . . reviewed and reformed*. This appears to be Baxter's paraphrase of the words of the king's Declaration which reads: "Yet since we find some exceptions made to many obsolete words, and other expressions used therein <the Book of Common Prayer> which upon the reformation and improvement of the English language may well be altered, we will appoint some learned divines of different persuasions to review the same, and to make such alterations as shall be thought most necessary, and some Additional Prayers as shall be thought fit for emergent occasions and the improvement of devotion; the using of which may be left to the discretion of the Ministers." It will be seen from this that the king's Declaration adopted the principle of "alternative use" which, as a matter of fact, had been Baxter's practice, for many years, in the conduct of public worship.

Page 163. *At the fortnight's end.* See Introd. Essay, p. xxviii. Baxter wrote many of his works at an extraordinarily rapid rate. He used shorthand. His *Saints' Everlasting Rest* occupied him a few months; his *Reformed Pastor* (which the Bishop of Durham has described as "the best manual of the clergyman's duty in the language."—*Cont. Rev.*, No. 709, Jan. 1925, p. 57) a few weeks; his *Aphorisms of Justification* (a closely argued work of 334 pages) apparently only a few days, while he was still engaged on the *Saints' Everlasting Rest*.

Page 166. *Dead saints.*

"Dead saints they honour'd, and the living kill'd,
The dead molest them not by their reproofs."

Poet. Frag., "*Hypocrisy*."

Page 168. *Archbishop of York.* Frewen (*marg.*).

Page 168. *Bishop Sanderson.* Since at his death, he made it his request that the ejected ministers might be used again: but his request was rejected by them that had overwitted him, as being too late (*marg.*).

In Walton's *Lives*, Sanderson is reported to have said of Baxter, "that he had never met with a man of more pertinacious confidence and less abilities in all his conversation."—A. H. Bullen's Ed. (1884), p. 393. The preceding discussion (*ibid.* pp. 391-3) suggests, however, that Baxter's scholastic intellect had over-matched and much irritated his opponents. Ranke, *History of England*, iii. 368, says that Baxter "seemed specially suited for the task, because the presence of the dignitaries of the Church, which overawed the rest, never for an instant discomposed his keen and logical argument"—Quoted Bp. of Chester's *Excerpt*, p. xv. "I spoke to them as on terms of equality as to the cause, yet with all honourable titles to their persons."—*Ante*, p. 165.

Page 170. *Martyr for charity as for faith.* See Introd. Essay, p. xvii.

Page 170. *A short speech.* Mr. Calamy was most of this time sick, or lame of a hurt which he had received (*marg.*).

Page 173. *Killed a man in cold blood.* Dr. Allestree of Eton College, who repeated this report, sent Baxter a contrite and handsome apology. It appears in Sylvester's Preface to the folio.

Page 175. *French massacre.* Or 100,000 as Pet. Moulin, Jun., saith, within a few weeks (*marg.*).

Page 186. *Some indulgence . . . not excluding the Papists.*

1. The Declaration for Liberty at *Breda* was for them. 2. Next the clause offered to be added to the Declaration of Ecclesiastical Affairs gave them the free exercise of their religion. 3. The foresaid

motion next attempted it. 4. This Declaration, 26 Dec., 1662, expressly promised it them. 5. Our Treaty after set on foot by the Lord Keeper Bridgman would have offered it them. And by breaking all these offers, we are ourselves in our present afflicted state (*marg.*).

Page 188. *Indulgence and comprehension*. The question was not of "toleration" in the modern sense, but whether there should be one National Comprehensive Church (with tolerated, i.e. authorised exceptions) or, on the other hand, an abandonment of the ideal of a unified national ecclesiastical policy, and, instead, the authorised multiplication of sects as the national ecclesiastical policy, with, however, a possible national prestige for one of them. A letter of Baxter's to an "Honourable Person" is printed in the folio, part ii., p. 434, in which he gives a considered and illuminating answer to the question, *Whether the way of Comprehension or Indulgence be more desirable?* The following extracts will indicate the lines of his argument which has important modern bearing.

"It is most evident that no friend of the Church should be for *Comprehension* without *Indulgence*; nor for *Indulgence* without the enlargement of the Act of Uniformity to a greater *Comprehension*; but for the *Conjunction of both*: which will attain the ends of both, and avoid the chief inconveniences of either alone.

"The way of *Comprehension* alone is not sufficient . . . because such *Comprehension* will still leave out many worthy Persons, whose Gifts God would <desire to> have exercised for his Church's service. . . ."

"The way of *Indulgence* alone is not sufficient . . . because it is exceeding desirable that as much *strength* and *unity* as may be, may be found in the established Body of the Clergy: which will be the glory of the Church, the advantage of his Gospel, the prevention of many sins of uncharitableness and the great safety and ease of his Majesty and the Realm. . . ."

"It is therefore most evident that the way desirable, is first a *Comprehension* of as many fit persons as may be taken in by law; and then a power in his Majesty to indulge the remnant so far as conduceth to the peace and benefit of Church and State."

Page 191. 8000 and near 300. About 10,000 a week died, accounting the Quakers, Anabaptists and others, who were not numbered in the weekly bills (*marg.*).

PART THREE

Page 195. After the heading of part iii., Baxter has a sub-heading: Novemb. 16, 1670. I began to add the memorials following.

Page 196. *When the plague grew hot*. It was the Plague that brought them out of their secret narrow Meetings into public (*marg.*).

Page 203. *Pottage*. See note *ante*, p. 28.

Page 205. *A man of no quick utterance.* I have since written my knowledge of him (*marg.*). This marginal note refers to *Additional Notes of the Life and Death of Sir Matthew Hale* (1682). These were appended to *The Life and Death of Sir Matthew Hale* by Gilbert Burnet (who had written his work before Baxter's *Additional Notes*).

Page 212. *Dichotomising will not do it.* "We ought not to overlook, that substitution of Trichotomy . . . in the method and disposition of Logic, which forms so prominent and substantial an excellence in Kant's Critique of the Pure Reason of the Judgment, and the rest of his works, belongs originally to Richard Baxter, a century before Kant; and this not as a hint, but as a fully evolved and systematically applied principle. Nay more than this: Baxter grounded it on an absolute idea presupposed in all intelligential acts: whereas Kant takes it only as a fact in which he seems to anticipate or suspect some yet deeper truth latent, and hereafter to be discovered."¹—Coleridge's *Notes on English Divines*, vol. ii. 106.

Page 213. *Hinckley.* Rector of Northfield, Birmingham. He published his correspondence with Baxter, *Fasciculus Literarum* (1680). See *Introd. Essay*, p. xxviii. n.

Page 214. *Cut his nose.* This greatly displeased the Commons (*marg.*).

Page 215. *Bartholomew Fair.* The allusion is to a skit on the Puritans with a scene from Bartholomew Fair worked in. See Mather Papers, printed for the Massachusetts Hist. Soc., 4th Series, vol. viii., pp. 177-8, for an account of a play performed before Charles II. in 1661. "In it were represented 2 Presbyterians under the fame of Mr. Baxter and Mr. Callamy whose Habitt and actions were sett forth."

I am indebted to Mr. Percy Simpson for this reference.

Page 216. *Edward Fowler.* Worthy but envied Pastor of Giles's Cripplegate Church (*marg.*).

Page 221. *Licence for preaching.* The original letter has been found by good fortune in the Baxter MSS., vol. vii. (Treatises), No. 71. It is dated 25 Oct., 1672, and defines Baxter's position with a clearness and brevity not bettered, so far as I know, in any of his published writings. It is so important that Baxter students will be glad to have it in full.

"SIR,—My want of acquaintance at the court, occasioneth me to use this boldness in desiring your help in the business here expressed; unless it be any inconvenience to you which if it be, I desire it not. I am one that need his Majesty's Licence for preaching which I have not hitherto sought, partly because I live where my preaching is unnecessary, and partly by frequent sicknesses hindered, and partly because I hear that Licences have been denied some who will not take them in the name of some sect, Independent, Presbyterian or Anabaptist or such like, or as preachers to such a

sect, which I cannot do (which occasioneth you this trouble). I therefore intreat you, to procure me a Licence on other terms, which I cannot but promise myself to obtain, when I read his Majesty's promise of it to all. And I think my follies are not more intolerable than all the rest. I have subjoined my case for him that draweth up the Licences to judge of. If you please to procure me one as a mere Nonconformist, I shall thankfully accept it. I pray you let the bearer know when he shall attend you for an answer, unless you lay by the business as inconvenient.

"And pardon that boldness to which your candour and kindness hath encouraged.

"Your servant,

"R: BAXTER.

"Oct. 25, 1672.

"MY CASE

"My Religion is meerly Christian; but as rejecting the Papal Monarchy and its attendant evils, I am a Protestant.

"The Rule of my faith and doctrine is the law of God in Nature and Scripture.

"The Church which I am a member of is the Universality of Christians, in conjunction with all particular churches of Christians in England or elsewhere in the world, whose communion according to my capacity I desire.

"My judgement of Church-government is for that Form of Episcopacy which is described in Ignatius and Cyprian, and was the usage then of the Christian churches.

"I have taken the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy. But my conscience forbidding me to make the solemn declaration <of> Assent and Consent to all things contained in and prescribed by the three books, to subscribe as is required in the Act of Uniformity and the Canon, as also to take the Oxford Oath, and the Oath of Canonical Obedience, I humbly crave his Majesty's Licence to preach the Gospel with a *Non obstante* to my Nonconformity.

"R. BAXTER.

"Oct. 25, 1672."

This is one of the most important of our Baxter documents. It not only defines what "Catholicism against all sects" meant for Baxter, but it shows that Baxter was not alone but represented a body of such "mere Nonconformists," whose religion was "meerly Christian."

Page 222. *Nor did I ever yet give the Sacrament except, etc.* See Intro. Essay, xxxiii. Why had Baxter these scruples about celebrating the Sacrament (as distinct from preaching the Gospel) elsewhere? It was not that he considered his deacon's orders insufficient, *as such*, else he would not have celebrated the Sacrament to his own flock at Kidderminster. It was, I suggest, that he felt that in addition to episcopal orders he must have the call and authority of the *particular* church of which he is the *presiding* minister. As Presiding Presbyter he may have regarded himself

as the equivalent of the "primitive" bishop. When he was but an assistant at Bridgnorth he "never administered the Lord's Supper" (p. 18 *ante*). But his *practical* reason was that he did not wish to offend Conformists and thus damage the prospects of Comprehension and Reunion.—See *Penitent Confession* (1691), p. 39.

Page 227. *Sir Herbert Croft*. 1603-1691. Appointed Bishop of Hereford (after Baxter had declined to take the vacancy), being at the time Dean of Hereford. He wrote anonymously *The Naked Truths*, "by an Humble Moderator" (1675)—a broadminded and generous plea for toleration. This work was reprinted in 1919 with an Introduction by the present Bishop of Durham (then of Hereford), and with a Bibliographical note by Mr. Stephen K. Jones, the librarian of Dr. Williams' Library.

Page 230. *St. James's*. See more of this in my Wife's Life (*marg.*).

"The Roof of that Market-house is a vast weight, and was ill-contrived to lie much on one beam in the middle of the floor. The place being greatly crowded, the beam gave so great a crack as put all the people in a fear. But a second crack set them all on running, and crying out at the windows for ladders. I, having seen the like before at Dunstan's Fleet Street, while I was preaching, . . . reproved them sharply for their fears, and would have gone on to preach; but see the strange hand of God on her that set all the work on foot! After the first crack she got down the stairs through the crowd, where others could not get that were stronger. The first man she met she asked him what profession he was of. He said, 'a carpenter.' Saith she, 'can you suddenly put a prop under the middle of this beam?' The man dwelt close by, had a meet prop ready, suddenly put it under, while all we above knew nothing of it. But the man's knocking encreased the people's fears and cry. We were glad all to be gone; and the next morning took a skilful workman to take up the boards and search the beam, which we all saw had two such rents, so long and so wide, and the sound part left was so slender that we took it for a wonder that the house fell not suddenly."—*Breviate of the Life of Mrs. Margaret Baxter*, pp. 54, 55. There is a MS. Sermon of Thanksgiving for this deliverance in Baxter MSS., vol. vii. (Treatises), No. 49.

Page 235. *I valued little more on earth*. Introd. Essay, p. xxv.

Page 237. *Constant pains*. Baxter's illnesses and pains have been understated. Sylvester did not carry out Baxter's own instructions in editing the passages in the folio that describe his diseases. In Baxter MSS., vol. vii. (Treatises) is preserved a long section. It is too terrible to be printed, though it is clear from the marginal note in Baxter's handwriting—"Blot out the narrative of my diseases in the former part, because the same is here repeated"—that this is the section that he intended finally for publication. It shows how he was throughout his life in almost unbroken and acute agony. It is especially interesting, because it gives dates, after the writing

(in the margin), and later on in the text of the writing itself, on which Baxter had conclusive proof that he suffered from stone and was right in his own diagnosis, as against all the doctors. Coleridge, who does not seem to have known the more harrowing details mentioned in the MS., writes, "The power of the soul, by its own act of will, is, I admit, great for any one occasion, or for a definite time; yea, it is marvellous. But of such exertions and such an even frame of spirit as Baxter's were . . . I do not believe a human soul capable, unless substantiated and successively potentiated by an especial divine grace."—*Notes on English Divines*, vol. ii. 103.

Page 238. *Dissect my corpse*. The only evidence known to me that there was a post-mortem dissection is a remark in Orme's *Life*, p. 402 n., that a stone was extracted from him, "very large, of a bluish colour, and resembling in shape the kidney itself." Orme states that in his time (1830) it was kept in the British Museum. I have failed, after inquiries, to trace it there or in the Natural History Museum.

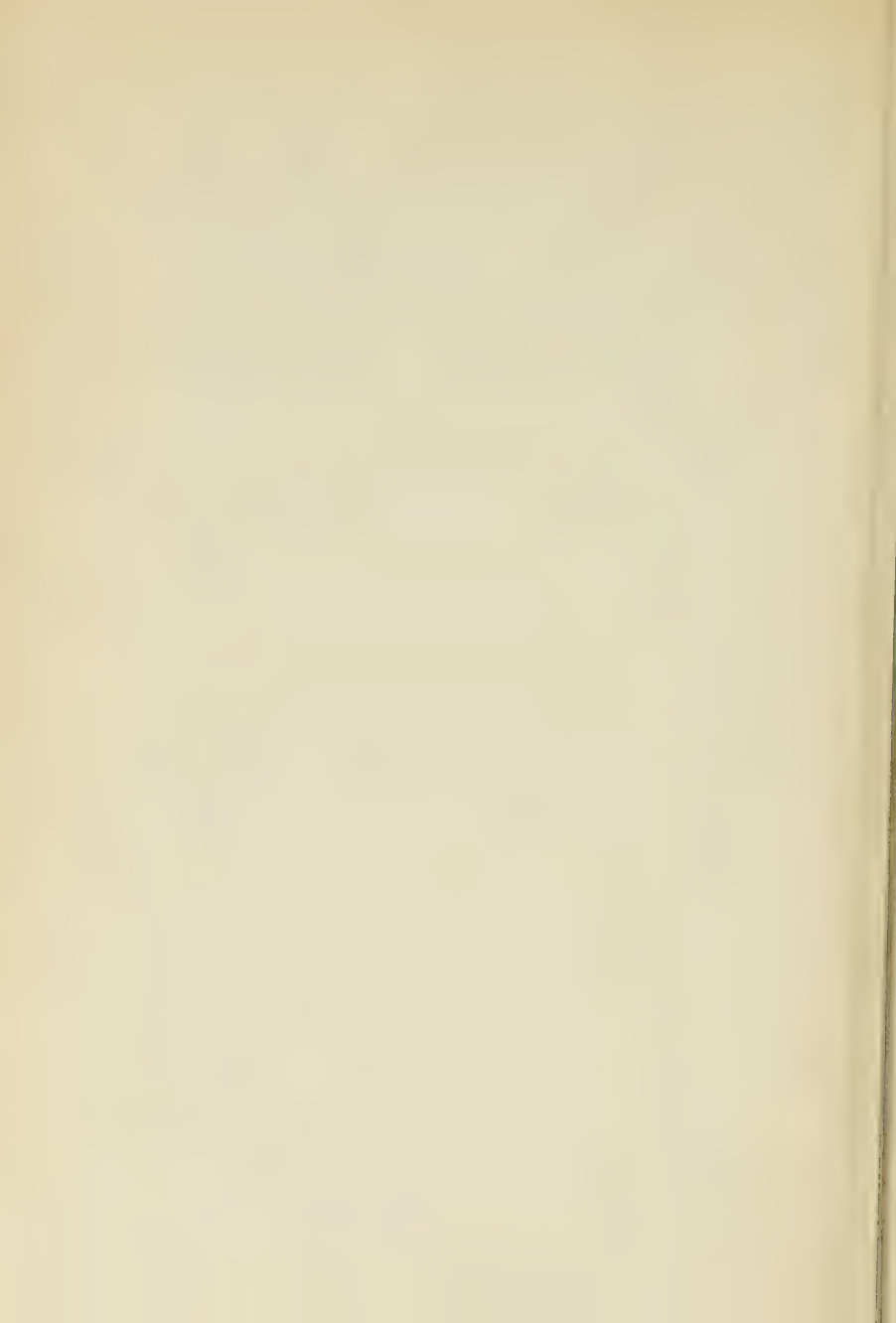
Page 238. *William Penn*. "Penn's language to Baxter, in two of his letters, is very abusive. He tells him 'I perceive the scurvy of the mind is thy distemper, and I fear it is incurable.'"—Orme's *Life*, p. 319 n.

Page 240. *Being denied forcibly*. The section preceding this in the folio and here omitted has a heading: Additions of the years 1675, 1676, 1677, 1678, etc.

Page 242. *Titus Oates*. A repulsive villain and proved perjurer. The atmosphere of the time was so charged with true as well as false rumours of plots and intrigues that discrimination was difficult. Oates's mendacity found ready belief among multitudes of people. He over-reached himself, was convicted, brutally flogged and re-flogged with horrible inhumanity, yet survived to recover some popularity after the Revolution. Baxter here, as in one or two other instances, shows himself too credulous in accepting panic-reports against Roman Catholics.

Page 243. *Dugdale*. He later fell into a state of abject terror in which he saw the ghost of Viscount Stafford. He and Edward Turberville, it was reported, "gave way to drink and in their delirium tremens imagined spectres and died miserably."—*D. N. B.*, vol. xvi. (Dugdale).

Page 253. *A Paraphrase of the New Testament*. See Appendix I., *post*.



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